

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

N<sup>o</sup>. 42.]

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1860.

[PRICE 2d.

## THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

MISS HALCOMBE'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

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Blackwater Park, Hampshire.

JUNE 27.—Six months to look back on—six long, lonely months, since Laura and I last saw each other!

How many days have I still to wait? Only one! To-morrow, the twenty-eighth, the travellers return to England. I can hardly realise my own happiness; I can hardly believe that the next four-and-twenty hours will complete the last day of separation between Laura and me.

She and her husband have been in Italy all the winter, and afterwards in the Tyrol. They come back, accompanied by Count Fosco and his wife, who propose to settle somewhere in the neighbourhood of London, and who have engaged to stay at Blackwater Park for the summer months before deciding on a place of residence. So long as Laura returns, no matter who returns with her. Sir Percival may fill the house from floor to ceiling, if he likes, on condition that his wife and I inhabit it together.

Meanwhile, here I am, established at Blackwater Park; "the ancient and interesting seat" (as the county history obligingly informs me) "of Sir Percival Glyde, Bart."—and the future abiding-place (as I may now venture to add, on my own account) of plain Marian Halecombe, spinster, now settled in a snug little sitting-room, with a cup of tea by her side, and all her earthly possessions ranged round her in three boxes and a bag.

I left Limmeridge yesterday; having received Laura's delightful letter from Paris, the day before. I had been previously uncertain whether I was to meet them in London, or in Hampshire; but this last letter informed me, that Sir Percival proposed to land at Southampton, and to travel straight on to his country-house. He has spent so much money abroad, that he has none left to defray the expenses of living in London, for the remainder of the season; and he is economically resolved to pass the summer and autumn quietly at Blackwater. Laura has had more than enough of excitement and change of scene; and is pleased at the prospect of country tranquillity and retirement which her husband's prudence provides for her. As for me, I am ready to be happy anywhere in her society. We

are all, therefore, well contented in our various ways, to begin with.

Last night, I slept in London, and was delayed there so long, to-day, by various calls and commissions, that I did not reach Blackwater, this evening, till after dusk.

Judging by my vague impressions of the place, thus far, it is the exact opposite of Limmeridge. The house is situated on a dead flat, and seems to be shut in—almost suffocated, to my north-country notions—by trees. I have seen nobody, but the man-servant who opened the door to me, and the housekeeper, a very civil person who showed me the way to my own room, and got me my tea. I have a nice little boudoir and bedroom, at the end of a long passage on the first floor. The servants' and some of the spare rooms are on the second floor; and all the living rooms are on the ground floor. I have not seen one of them yet, and I know nothing about the house, except that one wing of it is said to be five hundred years old, that it had a moat round it once, and that it gets its name of Blackwater from a lake in the park.

Eleven o'clock has just struck, in a ghostly and solemn manner, from a turret over the centre of the house, which I saw when I came in. A large dog has been woken, apparently by the sound of the bell, and is howling and yawning drearily, somewhere round a corner. I hear echoing footsteps in the passages below, and the iron thumping of bolts and bars at the house door. The servants are evidently going to bed. Shall I follow their example?

No: I am not half sleepy enough. Sleepy, did I say? I feel as if I should never close my eyes again. The bare anticipation of seeing that dear face and hearing that well-known voice to-morrow, keeps me in a perpetual fever of excitement. If I only had the privileges of a man, I would order out Sir Percival's best horse instantly, and tear away on a night-gallop, eastward, to meet the rising sun—a long, hard, heavy, ceaseless gallop of hours and hours, like the famous highwayman's ride to York. Being, however, nothing but a woman, condemned to patience, propriety, and petticoats, for life, I must respect the housekeeper's opinions, and try to compose myself in some feeble and feminine way.

Reading is out of the question—I can't fix my attention on books. Let me try if I can write myself into sleepiness and fatigue. My

journal has been very much neglected of late. What can I recal—standing, as I now do, on the threshold of a new life—of persons and events, of chances and changes, during the past six months—the long, weary, empty interval since Laura's wedding day?

Walter Hartright is uppermost in my memory; and he passes first in the shadowy procession of my absent friends. I received a few lines from him, after the landing of the expedition in Honduras, written more cheerfully and hopefully than he has written yet. A month or six weeks later, I saw an extract from an American newspaper, describing the departure of the adventurers on their inland journey. They were last seen entering a wild primeval forest, each man with his rifle on his shoulder and his baggage at his back. Since that time, civilisation has lost all trace of them. Not a line more have I received from Walter; not a fragment of news from the expedition has appeared in any of the public journals.

The same dense, disheartening obscurity hangs over the fate and fortunes of Anne Catherick, and her companion, Mrs. Clements. Nothing whatever has been heard of either of them. Whether they are in the country or out of it, whether they are living or dead, no one knows. Even Sir Percival's solicitor has lost all hope, and has ordered the useless search after the fugitives to be finally given up.

Our good old friend Mr. Gilmore has met with a sad check in his active professional career. Early in the spring, we were alarmed by hearing that he had been found insensible at his desk, and that the seizure had been pronounced to be an apoplectic fit. He had been long complaining of fulness and oppression in the head; and his doctor had warned him of the consequences that would follow his persistency in continuing to work, early and late, as if he was still a young man. The result now is that he has been positively ordered to keep out of his office for a year to come, at least, and to seek repose of body and relief of mind by altogether changing his usual mode of life. The business is left, accordingly, to be carried on by his partner; and he is, himself, at this moment, away in Germany, visiting some relations who are settled there in mercantile pursuits. Thus, another true friend, and trustworthy adviser, is lost to us—lost, I earnestly hope and trust, for a time only.

Poor Mrs. Vesey travelled with me, as far as London. It was impossible to abandon her to solitude at Limmeridge, after Laura and I had both left the house; and we have arranged that she is to live with an unmarried younger sister of hers, who keeps a school at Clapham. She is to come here this autumn to visit her pupil—I might almost say, her adopted child. I saw the good old lady safe to her destination; and left her in the care of her relative, quietly happy at the prospect of seeing Laura again, in a few months' time.

As for Mr. Fairlie, I believe I am guilty of

no injustice if I describe him as being unutterably relieved by having the house clear of us women. The idea of his missing his niece is simply preposterous—he used to let months pass, in the old times, without attempting to see her—and, in my case and Mrs. Vesey's, I take leave to consider his telling us both that he was half heart-broken at our departure, to be equivalent to a confession that he was secretly rejoiced to get rid of us. His last caprice has led him to keep two photographers incessantly employed on producing sun-pictures of all the treasures and curiosities in his possession. One complete copy of the collection of photographs is to be presented to the Mechanics' Institution of Carlisle, mounted on the finest cardboard, with ostentatious red-letter inscriptions underneath. "Madonna and Child by Raphael. In the possession of Frederick Fairlie, Esquire." "Copper coin of the period of Tiglath Pileser. In the possession of Frederick Fairlie, Esquire." "Unique Rembrandt etching. Known all over Europe, as *The Smudge*, from a printer's blot in the corner which exists in no other copy. Valued at three hundred guineas. In the possession of Frederick Fairlie, Esquire." Dozens of photographs of this sort, and all inscribed in this manner, were completed before I left Cumberland; and hundreds more remain to be done. With this new interest to occupy him, Mr. Fairlie will be a happy man for months and months to come; and the two unfortunate photographers will share the social martyrdom which he has hitherto inflicted on his valet alone.

So much for the persons and events which hold the foremost place in my memory. What, next, of the one person who holds the foremost place in my heart? Laura has been present to my thoughts, all the while I have been writing these lines. What can I recal of her, during the past six months, before I close my journal for the night?

I have only her letters to guide me; and, on the most important of all the questions which our correspondence can discuss, every one of those letters leaves me in the dark.

Does he treat her kindly? Is she happier now than she was when I parted with her on the wedding-day? All my letters have contained these two inquiries, put more or less directly, now in one form, and now in another; and all, on that one point only, have remained without reply, or have been answered as if my questions merely related to the state of her health. She informs me, over and over again, that she is perfectly well; that travelling agrees with her; that she is getting through the winter, for the first time in her life, without catching cold—but not a word can I find anywhere which tells me plainly that she is reconciled to her marriage, and that she can now look back to the twenty-third of December without any bitter feelings of repentance and regret. The name of her husband is only mentioned in her letters, as she might mention the name of a friend who was travelling with them, and who had undertaken

to make all the arrangements for the journey. "Sir Percival" has settled that we leave on such a day; "Sir Percival" has decided that we travel by such a road. Sometimes she writes, "Percival" only, but very seldom—in nine cases out of ten, she gives him his title.

I cannot find that his habits and opinions have changed and coloured hers in any single particular. The usual moral transformation which is insensibly wrought in a young, fresh, sensitive woman by her marriage, seems never to have taken place in Laura. She writes of her own thoughts and impressions, amid all the wonders she has seen, exactly as she might have written to some one else, if I had been travelling with her instead of her husband. I see no betrayal anywhere, of sympathy of any kind existing between them. Even when she wanders from the subject of her travels, and occupies herself with the prospects that await her in England, her speculations are busied with her future as my sister, and persistently neglect to notice her future as Sir Percival's wife. In all this, there is no under tone of complaint, to warn me that she is absolutely unhappy in her married life. The impression I have derived from our correspondence does not, thank God, lead me to any such distressing conclusion as that. I only see a sad torpor, an unchangeable indifference, when I turn my mind from her in the old character of a sister, and look at her, through the medium of her letters, in the new character of a wife. In other words, it is always Laura Fairlie who has been writing to me for the last six months, and never Lady Glyde.

The strange silence which she maintains on the subject of her husband's character and conduct, she preserves with almost equal resolution in the few references which her later letters contain to the name of her husband's bosom friend, Count Fosco.

For some unexplained reason, the Count and his wife appear to have changed their plans abruptly, at the end of last autumn, and to have gone to Vienna, instead of going to Rome, at which latter place Sir Percival had expected to find them when he left England. They only quitted Vienna in the spring, and travelled as far as the Tyrol to meet the bride and bridegroom on their homeward journey. Laura writes readily enough about the meeting with Madame Fosco, and assures me that she has found her aunt so much changed for the better—so much quieter and so much more sensible as a wife than she was as a single woman—that I shall hardly know her again when I see her here. But, on the subject of Count Fosco (who interests me infinitely more than his wife), Laura is provokingly circumspect and silent. She only says that he puzzles her, and that she will not tell me what her impression of him is, until I have seen him, and formed my own opinion first. This, to my mind, looks ill for the Count. Laura has preserved, far more perfectly than most people do in later life, the child's subtle faculty of knowing a friend by instinct; and, if I am right in assuming that her first impression

of Count Fosco has not been favourable, I, for one, am in some danger of doubting and distrusting that illustrious foreigner before I have so much as set eyes on him. But, patience, patience; this uncertainty, and many uncertainties more, cannot last much longer. Tomorrow will see all my doubts in a fair way of being cleared up, sooner or later.

Twelve o'clock has struck; and I have just come back to close these pages, after looking out at my open window.

It is a still, sultry, moonless night. The stars are dull and few. The trees that shut out the view on all sides, look dimly black and solid in the distance, like a great wall of rock. I hear the croaking of frogs, faint and far off; and the echoes of the great clock bell hum in the airless calm, long after the strokes have ceased. I wonder how Blackwater Park will look in the daytime? I don't altogether like it by night.

28th.—A day of investigations and discoveries—a more interesting day, for many reasons, than I had ventured to anticipate.

I began my sight-seeing, of course, with the house.

The main body of the building is of the time of that highly overrated woman, Queen Elizabeth. On the ground floor, there are two hugely long galleries, with low ceilings, lying parallel with each other, and rendered additionally dark and dismal by hideous family portraits—every one of which I should like to burn. The rooms on the floor above the two galleries, are kept in tolerable repair, but are very seldom used. The civil housekeeper, who acted as my guide, offered to show me over them; but considerably added that she feared I should find them rather out of order. My respect for the integrity of my own petticoats and stockings, infinitely exceeds my respect for all the Elizabethan bedrooms in the kingdom; so I positively declined exploring the upper regions of dust and dirt at the risk of soiling my nice clean clothes. The housekeeper said, "I am quite of your opinion, miss;" and appeared to think me the most sensible woman she had met with for a long time past.

So much, then, for the main building. Two wings are added, at either end of it. The half-ruined wing on the left (as you approach the house) was once a place of residence standing by itself, and was built in the fourteenth century. One of Sir Percival's maternal ancestors—I don't remember, and don't care, which—tacked on the main building, at right angles to it, in the aforesaid Queen Elizabeth's time. The housekeeper told me that the architecture of "the old wing," both outside and inside, was considered remarkably fine by good judges. On further investigation, I discovered that good judges could only exercise their abilities on Sir Percival's piece of antiquity by previously dismissing from their minds all fear of damp, darkness, and rats. Under these circumstances, I unhesitatingly acknowledged myself to be no judge at all; and suggested that we should treat

"the old wing" precisely as we had previously treated the Elizabethan bedrooms. Once more, the housekeeper said, "I am quite of your opinion, miss;" and once more she looked at me, with undisguised admiration of my extraordinary common sense.

We went, next, to the wing on the right, which was built, by way of completing the wonderful architectural jumble at Blackwater Park, in the time of George the Second. This is the habitable part of the house, which has been repaired and redecorated, inside, on Laura's account. My two rooms, and all the good bedrooms besides, are on the first floor; and the basement contains a drawing-room, a dining-room, a morning-room, a library, and a pretty little boudoir for Laura—all very nicely ornamented in the bright modern way, and all very elegantly furnished with the delightful modern luxuries. None of the rooms are anything like so large and airy as our rooms at Limmeridge; but they all look pleasant to live in. I was terribly afraid, from what I had heard of Blackwater Park, of fatiguing antique chairs, and dismal stained glass, and musty, frouzy hangings, and all the barbarous lumber which people born without a sense of comfort accumulate about them, in defiance of all consideration due to the convenience of their friends. It is an inexpresible relief to find that the nineteenth century has invaded this strange future home of mine, and has swept the dirty "good old times" out of the way of our daily life.

I dawdled away the morning—part of the time in the rooms down stairs; and part, out of doors, in the great square which is formed by the three sides of the house, and by the lofty iron railings and gates which protect it in front. A large circular fishpond, with stone sides and an allegorical leaden monster in the middle, occupies the centre of the square. The pond itself is full of gold and silver fish, and is encircled by a broad belt of the softest turf I ever walked on. I loitered here, on the shady side, pleasantly enough, till luncheon time; and, after that, took my broad straw hat, and wandered out alone, in the warm lovely sunlight, to explore the grounds.

Daylight confirmed the impression which I had felt the night before, of there being too many trees at Blackwater. The house is stifled by them. They are, for the most part, young, and planted far too thickly. I suspect there must have been a ruinous cutting down of timber, all over the estate, before Sir Percival's time, and an angry anxiety, on the part of the next possessor, to fill up all the gaps as thickly and rapidly as possible. After looking about me, in front of the house, I observed a flower-garden on my left hand, and walked towards it, to see what I could discover in that direction.

On a nearer view, the garden proved to be small and poor and ill-kept. I left it behind me, opened a little gate in a ring fence, and found myself in a plantation of fir-trees. A pretty, winding path, artificially made, led me on among the trees; and my north-country experience soon informed me that I was approach-

ing sandy, heathy ground. After a walk of more than half a mile, I should think, among the firs, the path took a sharp turn; the trees abruptly ceased to appear on either side of me; and I found myself standing suddenly on the margin of a vast open space; and looking down at the Blackwater lake from which the house takes its name.

The ground, shelving away below me, was all sand, with a few little heathy hillocks to break the monotony of it in certain places. The lake itself had evidently once flowed to the spot on which I stood, and had been gradually wasted and dried up to less than a third of its former size. I saw its still, stagnant waters, a quarter of a mile away from me in the hollow, separated into pools and ponds, by twining reeds and rushes, and little knolls of earth. On the farther bank from me, the trees rose thickly again, and shut out the view, and cast their black shadows on the sluggish, shallow water. As I walked down to the lake, I saw that the ground on its farther side was damp and marshy, overgrown with rank grass and dismal willows. The water, which was clear enough on the open sandy side, where the sun shone, looked black and poisonous opposite to me, where it lay deeper under the shade of the spongy banks and the rank overhanging thickets and tangled trees. The frogs were croaking, and the rats were slipping in and out of the shadowy water, like live shadows themselves, as I got nearer to the marshy side of the lake. I saw here, lying half in and half out of the water, the rotten wreck of an old overturned boat, with a sickly spot of sunlight glimmering through a gap in the trees on its dry surface, and a snake basking in the midst of the spot, fantastically coiled, and treacherously still. Far and near, the view suggested the same dreary impressions of solitude and decay; and the glorious brightness of the summer sky overhead, seemed only to deepen and harden the gloom and barrenness of the wilderness on which it shone. I turned and retraced my steps to the high, heathy ground; directing them a little aside from my former path, towards a shabby old wooden shed, which stood on the outer skirt of the fir plantation, and which had hitherto been too unimportant to share my notice with the wide, wild prospect of the lake.

On approaching the shed, I found that it had once been a boat-house, and that an attempt had apparently been made to convert it afterwards into a sort of rude arbour, by placing inside it a firwood seat, a few stools, and a table. I entered the place, and sat down for a little while, to rest and get my breath again.

I had not been in the boat-house more than a minute, when it struck me that the sound of my own quick breathing was very strangely echoed by something beneath me. I listened intently for a moment, and heard a low, thick, sobbing breath that seemed to come from the ground under the seat which I was occupying. My nerves are not easily shaken by trifles; but, on this occasion, I started to my feet in a fright

—called out—received no answer—summoned back my recreant courage—and looked under the seat.

There, crouched up in the farthest corner, lay the forlorn cause of my terror, in the shape of a poor little dog—a black and white spaniel. The creature moaned feebly when I looked at it and called to it, but never stirred. I moved away the seat and looked closer. The poor little dog's eyes were glazing fast, and there were spots of blood on its glossy white side. The misery of a weak, helpless, dumb creature is surely one of the saddest of all the mournful sights which this world can show. I lifted the poor dog in my arms as gently as I could, and contrived a sort of make-shift hammock for him to lie in, by gathering up the front of my dress all round him. In this way, I took the creature, as painlessly as possible, and as fast as possible, back to the house.

Finding no one in the hall, I went up at once to my own sitting-room, made a bed for the dog with one of my old shawls, and rang the bell. The largest and fattest of all possible housemaids answered it, in a state of cheerful stupidity which would have provoked the patience of a saint. The girl's fat, shapeless face actually stretched into a broad grin, at the sight of the wounded creature on the floor.

"What do you see there to laugh at?" I asked, as angrily as if she had been a servant of my own. "Do you know whose dog it is?"

"No, miss, that I certainly don't." She stopped, and looked down at the spaniel's injured side—brightened suddenly with the irradiation of a new idea—and, pointing to the wound with a chuckle of satisfaction, said, "That's Baxter's doings, that is."

I was so exasperated that I could have boxed her ears. "Baxter?" I said. "Who is the brute you call Baxter?"

The girl grinned again, more cheerfully than ever. "Bless you, miss! Baxter's the keeper; and when he finds strange dogs hunting about, he takes and shoots 'em. It's keeper's dooty, miss. I think that dog will die. Here's where he's been shot, ain't it? That's Baxter's doings, that is. Baxter's doings, miss, and Baxter's dooty."

I was almost wicked enough to wish that Baxter had shot the housemaid instead of the dog. Seeing that it was quite useless to expect this densely impenetrable personage to give me any help in relieving the suffering creature at our feet, I told her to request the housekeeper's attendance, with my compliments. She went out exactly as she had come in, grinning from ear to ear. As the door closed on her, she said to herself, softly, "It's Baxter's doings and Baxter's dooty—that's what it is."

The housekeeper, a person of some education and intelligence, thoughtfully brought up-stairs with her some milk and some warm water. The instant she saw the dog on the floor, she started and changed colour.

"Why, Lord bless me," cried the housekeeper, "that must be Mrs. Catherick's dog!"

"Whose?" I asked, in the utmost astonishment.

"Mrs. Catherick's. You seem to know Mrs. Catherick, Miss Halcombe?"

"Not personally. But I have heard of her. Does she live here? Has she had any news of her daughter?"

"No, Miss Halcombe. She came here to ask for news?"

"When?"

"Only yesterday. She said some one had reported that a stranger answering to the description of her daughter had been seen in our neighbourhood. No such report has reached us here; and no such report was known in the village, when I sent to make inquiries there on Mrs. Catherick's account. She certainly brought this poor little dog with her when she came; and I saw it trot out after her when she went away. I suppose the creature strayed into the plantations, and got shot. Where did you find it, Miss Halcombe?"

"In the old shed that looks out on the lake."

"Ah, yes, that is the plantation side, and the poor thing dragged itself, I suppose, to the nearest shelter, as dogs will, to die. If you can moisten its lips with the milk, Miss Halcombe, I will wash the clotted hair from the wound. I am very much afraid it is too late to do any good. However, we can but try."

Mrs. Catherick! The name still rang in my ears, as if the housekeeper had only that moment surprised me by uttering it. While we were attending to the dog, the words of Walter Hart-right's caution to me returned to my memory. "If ever Anne Catherick crosses your path, make better use of the opportunity, Miss Halcombe, than I made of it." The finding of the wounded spaniel had led me already to the discovery of Mrs. Catherick's visit to Blackwater Park; and that event might lead, in its turn, to something more. I determined to make the most of the chance which was now offered me, and to gain as much information as I could.

"Did you say that Mrs. Catherick lived anywhere in this neighbourhood?" I asked.

"Oh, dear no," said the housekeeper. "She lives at Wellingham; quite at the other end of the county—five-and-twenty miles off at least."

"I suppose you have known Mrs. Catherick for some years?"

"On the contrary, Miss Halcombe; I never saw her before she came here, yesterday. I had heard of her, of course, because I had heard of Sir Percival's kindness in putting her daughter under medical care. Mrs. Catherick is rather a strange person in her manners, but extremely respectable-looking. She seemed sorely put out, when she found that there was no foundation—none, at least, that any of us could discover—for the report of her daughter having been seen in this neighbourhood."

"I am rather interested about Mrs. Catherick," I went on, continuing the conversation as long as possible. "I wish I had arrived here soon enough to see her yesterday. Did she stay for any length of time?"

"Yes," said the housekeeper, "she stayed for some time. And I think she would have remained longer, if I had not been called away to speak to a strange gentleman—a gentleman who came to ask when Sir Percival was expected back. Mrs. Catherick got up and left at once, when she heard the maid tell me what the visitor's errand was. She said to me, at parting, that there was no need to tell Sir Percival of her coming here. I thought that rather an odd remark to make, especially to a person in my responsible situation."

I thought it an odd remark, too. Sir Percival had certainly led me to believe, at Limmeridge, that the most perfect confidence existed between himself and Mrs. Catherick. If that was the case, why should she be anxious to have her visit at Blackwater Park kept a secret from him?

"Probably," I said, seeing that the housekeeper expected me to give my opinion on Mrs. Catherick's parting words; "probably, she thought the announcement of her visit might vex Sir Percival to no purpose, by reminding him that her lost daughter was not found yet. Did she talk much on that subject?"

"Very little," replied the housekeeper. "She talked principally of Sir Percival, and asked a great many questions about where he had been travelling, and what sort of lady his new wife was. She seemed to be more soured and put out than distressed, by failing to find any traces of her daughter in these parts. 'I give her up,' were the last words she said that I can remember; 'I give her up, ma'am, for lost.' And from that, she passed at once to her questions about Lady Glyde; wanting to know if she was a handsome, amiable lady, comely and healthy and young—Ah, dear! I thought how it would end. Look, Miss Halecombe! the poor thing is out of its misery at last!"

The dog was dead. It had given a faint, sobbing cry, it had suffered an instant's convulsion of the limbs, just as those last words, "comely and healthy and young," dropped from the housekeeper's lips. The change had happened with startling suddenness—in one moment, the creature lay lifeless under our hands.

Eight o'clock. I have just returned from dining down stairs, in solitary state. The sunset is burning redly on the wilderness of trees that I see from my window; and I am poring over my journal again, to calm my impatience for the return of the travellers. They ought to have arrived, by my calculations, before this. How still and lonely the house is in the drowsy evening quiet! Oh, me! how many minutes more before I hear the carriage-wheels and run down stairs to find myself in Laura's arms?

The poor little dog! I wish my first day at Blackwater Park had not been associated with death—though it is only the death of a stray animal.

Welmaningham—I see, on looking back through these private pages of mine, that Welmingham is the name of the place where Mrs. Catherick

lives. Her note is still in my possession, the note in answer to that letter about her unhappy daughter which Sir Percival obliged me to write. One of these days, when I can find a safe opportunity, I will take the note with me by way of introduction, and try what I can make of Mrs. Catherick at a personal interview. I don't understand her wishing to conceal her visit to this place from Sir Percival's knowledge; and I don't feel half so sure, as the housekeeper seems to do, that her daughter Anne is not in the neighbourhood, after all. What would Walter Hartright have said in this emergency? Poor, dear Hartright! I am beginning to feel the want of his honest advice and his willing help, already.

Surely, I heard something? Yes! there is a bustle of footsteps below stairs. I hear the horses' feet; I hear the rolling of wheels. Away with my journal and my pen and ink! The travellers have returned—my darling Laura is home again at last!

#### TURKISH SHOPS AND SHOPKEEPERS.

I AM not going just yet to pronounce a talismanic text of the Koran as an "Open, Sesame!" and then plunge, boldly and adventurously, out of the fiery sun into the dim vaults of the Constantinople bazaars; I am merely going to stroll through the narrow, steep streets of the Sick Man's city, SHOPPING.

I am *not* about to say that London walking is dull walking, when to me, well as I know, and much as I love, the pure green country, Fleet-street is always fairy-land, and Regent-street enchanted ground; but still I think English shops are not to be compared to those of Stamboul, in their power of affording pleasure and amusement to the itinerant traveller and poetical or artistic vagabondiser, for reasons I will disclose anon. London shops, particularly your cork leg shop, your glass-eye shop, your Christmas toy shop, your seal engraver's shop, furnish pretty material to the thoughtful humorist (and who can be a real humorist without being thoughtful); but then you have to blunt your nose against glass, already opaquely steamed with youthful breath, or to sneak about doorways, at the imminent risk of being suspected as a swell mobsman, or a cracksmen, whereas in the Orient shops, all is open air life. The shops have the lids off; they are pies without crust. The goods are laid out on sloping slabs, such as our English fishmongers use to display their ichthyological specimens upon; they are small bulkheads, or more generally narrow open stalls, without doors or windows, and with limited platform counters, upon which robed and turbaned Turks sit, as if they had been acting

stories from the Arabian Nights in private theatricals the night before, and had not yet had time to change their clothes. Those grave and reverend seigniors are always to be seen sitting cross-legged, generally smoking (Ali Baba or Mustapha), and half dozing, taking a quiet, un-hurried, kind, and contemplative view of life,

Donkeys may pass and bump against the door-posts, thieves may run by (as I have seen them), pursued by angry soldiers with drawn and flashing sabres, the Sick Man himself may ride past, sad, and hopeless, and felon-faced, with the ambassadors he is so sick of—mortally sick of—at his elbows, still, nothing moves our friend in the decent, unruffled mushroom button of a white or green turban. If a Job's messenger were to come in and say that his thirty-third wife was dead, or that fire from Allah had burnt down his villa at Buyukdere, the most Mustapha would do would be to fill his pipe rather quicker than usual, and puffing a little faster than usual, to tell his beads, and curse the infidels all over the world.

A Turkish shopkeeper's goods never project into the road; he has no outside counter, like our vendors of old books; he has no old clothes and regiments fluttering obtrusively in a bankrupt, suicide way at his outer doors. His little quiet shop is flush with the roadside wall, and, sell he mouthpieces of pipes, clogs for the bath-room, or fez caps, they are all kept inside the little bin of a shop, on the floor of which, and at the entrance of which, sits the Turk, the master, with his red slippers before him.

Tired of travellers' generalities, and really wishing to paint truly, brightly, and minutely what I see, I yet know scarcely how to convey a thorough impression of Turkish shops. Whether I will or no, I must do it partly by negatives. They are not enormous cleared-out ground floors of dwelling houses, as in London, but rather cobbler-like, one-storied covered stalls, where lurks a turbaned quiet man, aided by a black-eyed Greek, or fat brown Armenian boy, who, to prevent the good phlegmatic man using his legs, get down from shelves, or from the inner vaulted bin, the striped silks, the sandal wood beads, the aloes wood, the hippopotamus hide whips, the spongy bath towels, or whatever it may be you want.

You could, I found, hardly imagine a man going to cheat you who was in no hurry to get down his gold striped cloths, who requested you to tuck up your legs on his counter, who sent out for lemonade or sherbet, or called for pipes and coffee. I used always to think, when I coiled myself up to buy some small trifle (a little red pipe bowl, or a pair of slippers, starred with seed pearl), that Mustapha treated me more like some bearded Arabian merchant who had come to spend a month with him, than a "loafing" infidel, who was in a burning hurry, and had only a sovereign or two to spend. But when that venerable and majestic Turk, sitting with his red slippers before him, began to ask me exactly two hundred times the worth of that pipe and those slippers, my respect for the trading instincts of the patriarchal old bearded humbug increased tremendously, though I knew he longed to spit in my coffee, and to football my unshorn head up and down the knubbly street.

But I cannot describe Turkish shops and enable readers to decide what age of civilisation they belong to, unless I also describe the streets

that lead to them and from them, that face them, that back them, that bring them customers, that lame the said customers they take away. In like manner as the nineteenth century Turk is one and the same with the Turk of the seventeenth century, so are the Stamboul streets of 1860 much what the Stamboul streets must have been in 1660. Drive the Turk back tomorrow to his Asian tent, and he would be as fit for it as ever he was. Turn him out to-morrow from the city he stole from Christianity, and you will find the same streets that you would have found when Busbequius or Grelot visited Turkey—no better, no worse. In fact, cramp a Moslem in Paris boots till corns spring out all over him, pinch his brown fists in Jouvin's white kid gloves, squeeze him in invisible green Yorkshire cloth, scent him, eye-glass him, grease him, uniform him as you like, the Turk will still remain the unimprovable Chinaman of the world, his religion a dangerous lie, his polygamy detestable, every country he governs a dunghill or a desert. I longed to tell Mustapha so, when he used to sit stolid and divinely contemptuous if I came in a hurry for some tufted Broussa bath towels, upon which I know he would have bowed and wished me peace, believing that I was complimenting him in my own tongue. I never could have been angry, however, with Mustapha, unless he had actually struck me or called me "dog," because, however cheating he is, he is such a gentleman, with his mildness and his courtesy; he never does anything ludicrous, or gauche, or intrusive, or fussy, or vulgar; he is never pert, never pompous, but looks like Abraham and Jonah, and Isaac and Jacob, and King Solomon all in one. He seems to be incapable of fret or worry, and when he dies it will be, I am sure, without a struggle, for he was never fully awake yet.

As to the streets that lead to other shops than Mustapha's. In the first place, they are as narrow as Shoo-lane, yes, even that Regent-street of Constantinople which leads to St. Sophia, or the Piccadilly that branches on to the Hippodrome, is a mere rough path; and Stamboul being, like Rome, a city of Seven Hills, half its lanes are five times as steep as Holborn-hill, London. They have no smooth slabs of side pavement, no kerbs, no lamps, no names, no guarding side-posts. They are covered with what is merely a jolting mass of boulder stones thrown down loose as when uncared, or if sound trottoir for a few yards, in another step or two ground into holes or crushed into something like a stonemasons'-yard, or a pebbly sea beach bristly with geological specimens. If a barricade had just been pulled down, and not yet levelled, so would it look; if it were the street of a mountain village, so would it be. As in the days of Adam, and before Macadam was thought of, so are the streets still.

To ladies impossible, to men terrible, imagine, plus, these torrent beds of streets, mountain defiles after an inundation, or a landslip avalanche of shingle, a continuous stream of ox-carts, water-carriers and oil-carriers, ass

drivers, bread sellers, carriages with Turkish ladies, pashas and their mounted retinue, pack-horses, children, and Circassian loungers. Then, on every vacant spot strew praying dervishes, sleeping, couchant, or rampant wild dogs, melon-stalls and beggars, throw up above a ball of solid fire and call it the sun, and you have some small idea of the delight of walking in the Dying Man's city.

But let us stroll down this street, where the planes toss their green jagged leaves over those gratings, and through which I see the stone turbans of tombstones, with, below, blue-and-gilt verses from the Koran; and let us get to this slovenly, downhill lane, leading towards the bazaars. In it we shall find nearly every class of Turkish trade. Those Armenian porters, with their knots and ropes on their backs, seem smilingly to promise as much, when they offer to carry home the English sultan's purchases for him; and as for that, I believe they would carry home a house on their backs, if it only had handles.

"Way there!"—what a howl of "Guardia! Guard-diah"! Just as I am stopping for a cup of water at a gilded fountain, I am driven into a mastic shop by eight Armenian porters, four behind and four in front, who are staggering up-hill with a gigantic steel-bound bale, considerably larger than a chest of drawers, out of which ooze some yellow webs of silk; the load vibrates on two enormous lance-wood poles, thin at the ends and thick in the middle. Now, for a moment, these brawny men stop to rest the burden, and wipe their brown, rugged, beaded foreheads. Honour the sturdy industry of the honest Armenian hammals, who stop for no one, not even the Sultan himself, who pass, howling out a rapid caution, through weeping funeral or laughing wedding procession, marching soldiers, anything, any one; and who, for a few pence, unapplauded, perform the labours of Hercules in the Sick Man's city.

Attentive to trade interests, as well as to the rights of hospitality, the Turk in the shop where I have taken refuge, points to the heaps of mastic upon his counter, and I buy a little to chew, because I have heard that Turkish ladies spend the greater part of their lives in this harmless, but unintellectual occupation. Mastic resembles gum Arabic; it is crystallly cracked, yellow in colour, like a pale flawed topaz, and has no taste at all to mention. It produces no effect, opiate or otherwise, and for all I could see, I might as well have spent my time sucking a little pebble, as schoolboys do when they are going to run a race, and want to improve their "wind." It lasted me about half an hour, till I got to the square of Bajazet. At the end of that time, I got alarmed, and taking it out of my mouth and looking at it, I found it changed to a sudden opaque lump of a dull white colour, which tasted like chewed india-rubber; so I flipped it at a street dog in disgust, and the street dog swallowed it immediately, as he would have done, no doubt, had I thrown him a shoeing-horn or a pair of old braces.

My Turk now wanted me to buy some henna powder for the ladies of my harem, but I declined, upon which he clapped his hands, as if to call his negro boy, and in bounded a bushy white cat that he had dyed a rose pink to prove the excellence of his drugs; but even this did not induce me to buy anything, for a clog shop next door then allured me, and I stopped to see the apprentices with short adzes cleaving the wood, with which they fashioned the wooden sole, and the stilted supports of the "chopines," on which the Turkish ladies clatter across the cold marble floor of their fountain-sprinkled bath-rooms into the inner cells, where they disappear in a cloud of hot steam, from which merry laughing and the splashing of water is heard at intervals. This is quite a West-end shop for Turkey, and they sell all kinds of bath clogs here, from the plain wooden to the rich polished pairs, that are lozenged and starred with mother-of-pearl, in a style fit for Zobeide herself.

How quiet and industrious the workmen are! twice as vigorous as Spaniards, and patiently enjoying the labour, with scarcely even an eye for passing scenes in the street. No plate-glass here, no varnished brackets, no pattern dwarf boot, or skeleton bone foot; nothing but chips and shavings, and split, split, hammer, hammer; a man at work behind, with some curious glue, is inserting the patterns of pearl into the wooden slabs cleverly enough.

A pipe-shop next. One Nubian and three young Turks, with a patriarch watching them, while he does the finer work himself. One turban and three scarlet fezes, all cross-legged, and the Nubian holding his work between his bare feet, for his toes are handier than many men's fingers. Good-natured, like all his race, a chronic grin of unctuous content is on his face. A worse specimen of a slave for platform and inflammatory purposes could not be found. The shop is not much bigger than six cobblers' stalls thrown into one, and the wall at the back is lined with pipe-stems, that rest against it like so many javelins. They are surely old Arab spear-shafts, pierced for new and more peaceful purposes. The dark-red ones are cherry stems from Asia Minor; the rough light-brown ones, jasmin saplings from Albania. They are about five feet long, and form the real chibouk that the Turk loves when it is finished off with a small red tea-cup of a bowl, and that bowl is crammed with the choicest tobacco of Salonica. But what are those coloured coils, like variegated eels, that twine and curl on the floor—for this is not a serpent charmer's? Those, innocent Frank, making a Guy of thyself with that bandaging of white muslin around thy wide-awake, are the tubes of narghilés, that the Turks love even more than the chibouk to smoke, because it is handier for small rooms, and does not require an orbit of five feet to each puffer. Look opposite at that coffee-shop, which is the Turkish tavern: see those four men. They are mere poor men, but they come in to lunch off a farthing cup of coffee, without milk or sugar, and a puff of a narghilé. How dignified they

sit, till the globular bottles with the tubes coiled round them, are brought, the tobacco burning red above on its little cup of charcoal. See, only a dozen puffs, and the pure water from the fountain yonder is polluted in the bottles to a lemonade colour by the smoke it softens, and its bubble and gurgle is soothings to listen to! Miles of that tubing, red, green, blue, and crimson, are made annually in Constantinople. See how nattily the men bind the tubes with fine wire, to make them at once flexible and endurable. A Roman alderman once wished he had a throat three yards long. The Turkish epicure of smoke has realised the wish by making his pinch of tobacco go further than any one else's. Now, having bought ten yards of narghilé tube, with a fringed end, do you want an amber mouthpiece for your chibouk? Old Turks think they make the smoke bitter and harsh, and therefore prefer the plain cherry-wood pur et simple, sucking the smoke through it, and not putting the pipe between their lips at all; but tastes differ.

Here is the shop. Cases on the counter; within them, rows of mouthpieces, looking like sucked barley sugar, golden and transparent. The amber is of all shades of yellow, from opaque lemon to burnt saffron. Some of those more shiny ones are only glass, the dearer ones have little fillets of diamonds round their necks, and are worth a purse full of piastres. Then there are dull green ones for cheap pipes, and meerschaum cigaret holders for the cursed Frank, who had better take care he is not made a fool of, for greasy Turkish bank-notes are all alike, except for the numeral, which it requires practice to read; and then there are old and new notes, and bad gold Medjids, and Heaven knows what cheatings, in this scorpions' nest of foreign rogues and schemers. Do you want rosaries? Here are talismans made of chips of red cornelian, and aloes wood for incense. But here a ruder shop, not matted, nor cushioned, arrests us. Plain beaten earth floor, rude counter. It looks more like a deserted blacksmith's shop than anything else. It belongs to a maker of vermicelli. The owner, ghostly white in face, is brushing a huge tin tray round and round. The brush must be of wire, or be grooved or toothed, for I see the caked material under which the fire is, is drawn and cut into tubed threads, and he draws it out as it dries, like so much carded flax, dexterously indeed. I see that he knows when it is done by its threads snapping and springing up, crisp and loose, from the tin shield. Good-natured people that the Turks are! He smiles and nods to me, quite pleased at the interest the wandering, spying out Giaour takes in his performance.

Now, moving on, I get into a strata of edibles, for here, at a window, lolls an immense hide full of white cheese, looking like stale cream cheese, become dry and powdery. It comes from Odessa, I am told, or is made of buffalo's milk, and is brought by camels from the interior of Anatolia, for butter and milk are all but unknown in Turkey. At the next stall are dried devil-fish, looking horrible with their hundred leathery arms; but here, where sword-fish were once a

favourite dish, and the people are very poor, what can one expect?

Who shall say the Turks are bigoted and intolerant, when here, next door to a baker's, is a shop with coarse Greek prints, representing Botzaris, the Greek hero, putting to death heaps of Turks, and here are tons of illustrations, in which the Turk is always getting the worst of it. There was a time when to even delineate a human being was death in Turkey, but now—

It was hard times for the bakers twenty years ago, when you could hardly be a week in Constantinople without seeing one of the tribe groaning with a nail through his ear, fastening him to his own shop door. That was the time when women were drowned in sacks in broad daylight, and when the sight of a rebel pasha's head, brought in in triumph, has taken away the appetite of many an Englishman breakfasting with a Turkish minister. But there he (the baker) is now, floury, ghostly, and serious as ever, groping in that black cave of an oven at the back of his shop, or twisting rings of bread with all the unction of a feeder of mankind and a well-paid philanthropist.

The fez shops are very numerous in the Sick Man's city, for turbans decrease, though slowly. They are of a deep crimson, and have at the top a little red stalk, to which the heavy blue tassel is tied, and which always, to prevent entanglement, is kept in stock with a sort of ornament of paper cut into a lace pattern round it. The blocks, too, for fezes to be kept on, are sold in distinct shops. You see them round as cheeses ranged in front of a Turk, who watches them as if expecting them to grow. Sometimes you could hardly help thinking they were pork-pies, were it not for the barelegged boy in the background, who, pushing the block with the flexible sole of his foot, keeps it even upon the lathe.

Stationers and booksellers hardly show at all in Stamboul but in the bazaar, and there in a very limited way, and in a way, too, that makes the Englishman wish they were away altogether. The tailor, too, does not figure largely, though you see Turks busy in their shops sewing at quilted gowns and coverlids stuffed with down; and you seldom pass down a street without seeing a man with a bow, such as the Saracen of Snow-hill could scarcely have drawn, bowing cotton, with the twang and flutter peculiar to that occupation, the slave behind half buried in flock, or emerging from a swansdown sea of loose white feathers.

The jewellers (frequently Jews) are chiefly in the bazaars, both for safety and convenience. There they sit, sorting great heaps of seed pearl, like so much rice, squinting through lumps of emerald, or weighing filigree earrings, with veiled ladies looking on, and black duennas in yellow boots in waiting; but still there are also a few outsiders who sell coarse European watches with unseemly French cases, and large bossy silver cases for rose-water, or some such frivolous use, shaped like huge melons, and crusted with patterning, much watched

over by the Turkish police, who, in blue tunies, red fezes, and white trousers, sneak about rather ingloriously, saving for the ornamented holster at their belt, in which their pistols lurk.

It is not possible to go up a Turkish street, if it contain any shops, without also finding among them a furniture shop, where Chinese-looking stools and large chests are sold, their whole surface diec'd over with squares of mother-of-pearl, frequently dry and loose with extreme age. They are now, we believe, rather out of fashion in the palaces on the Bosphorus.

But these are the first-rate streets in the lower alleys. Round the gates of the Golden Horn side of the city, down by the timber stores and the fish-market, the shops are mere workshops, and alternate with mere sheds, and with rooms full to the very door with shining millet or sesame, which looks like caraway seed; with charcoal stores, and fruit-stands where little green peaches are sold, the true Turk preferring raw fruit to ripe.

In these lower Thames-street sort of neighbourhoods—in winter knee-deep in mud, and in summer almost impassable for traffic, towards the Greek quarter especially—you are sure to find a comb-shop, a little place about as large as four parrots' cages, where an old ragged Turk and a dirty boy are at work, straightening crooked bullocks' horns by heat, sawing them into slices, chopping them thinner and thinner, and cutting out the coarse teeth. The workman, powdered with yellow horn dust, perhaps stops now and then to drink from the red earth jug that is by his side, or deals with a mahabiji, or street sweet-seller, for that delicious sort of rice blanemange he sells—yellow all through, powdered with white sugar, and eaten with a brass spoon of delightfully antique shape; or, he is discussing a shovelful of burnt chestnuts; or, a head of maize boiled to a flowery pulp, eaten with a ring of bread, and washed down with a draught from the nearest fountain; or he is stopping, the patriarch master being away, to listen to the strains of an itinerant Nubian, who stands under a mosque wall yonder, with a curious banjo slung round his black neck, the handle a big knotted reed, the body large as a groon's sieve and of the same shape. Some black female servants are near, also listening, and I can tell from what African province they are by the scars of the three gashes that, as they think, adorn their left cheeks. Close to where they stand, perhaps, is a shop full of fleas and pigeons, the latter always hustling about and cooing, and evidently on sale.

But shall I forget the tobacco shops that are incessant, that are everywhere; upon the hills and down by the water, round St. Sophia and close even to the Sublime Porte itself? In England, I have always from a boy envied two tradesmen, the one the cabinet-maker, the other the ivory-turner; the one, dealing with such a dainty material; the other, so dexterous and refined in its manipulations. In Turkey I always longed to be either a jeweller or a tobacco merchant, the one

with a stock so portable and costly, the other with a trade so much patronised yet requiring so little apparatus. The tailor fags his eyes out, but the tobacco merchant buys his skinfuls of tobacco, or his leathern bagfuls of the Syrian jibili, the patient hammal throws it down in his shop, he buys a tobacco-cutter, a pair of scales, a brass tiara of a tray to pile the show samples up in, and there he sits and smokes till a purchaser come. No heart-breaking change, no docks to trudge to, no anything. Nothing but to drag up brimming handfuls of the saffron thread and to sell it by the oke, trebling the price, of course, to an accursed Frank. What did the Turks do (I often thought) before smoking was invented? Did they play at chess, cut off Christians' heads perpetually, or murder their wives like Bluebeard, that vulgar type of the Turk? What did they do before coffee, on which they now seem to live, sipping it all day, hot, and black, and thick, tossing off grounds and all.

What is this shop, larger, wealthier, and more European-looking than its fellows, into which are now entering those three white-veiled, nun-like Turkish ladies, who draw up their rich silks of violet and canary colour quite above their bright yellow shapeless boots? They go in and sit down like so many children, on the low four-legged rush-bottomed stools, so full of mirth and mischief, that they agitate and distress and delight the quiet Turkish sweetmeat-seller and his black servant, who is steeping little oval shelly pistachio nuts in a tin of melting sugar and oil. The walls of the shop are hung with long walking-sticks (cudgels, shall I say?) of that precious and fragrant sweetmeat known in hareems as "rahat li koum," or "lumps of delight," which is a glutinous sort of jelly of a pale lemon or rose colour, flavoured with sugar, and knotted and veined with the whitest and curdiest of almonds. It is a delicious, paradiseical, gluey business, and horribly indigestible.

Those fair English friends of mine who nibble at a fowl, and sip hesitatingly at a jelly, wishing to be thought mere fragile angels who drink the essence of flowers and live upon invalid spoonfuls of the most refined delicacies, might derive benefit from seeing Zobeide, Scheherazade, and the fair Persian wives of that renowned pasha, Dowdy Pasha, consume yards—yes, positively yards—of those sweetmeat walking-sticks, washing down the bane of digestion with plentiful draughts of red-currant sherbet, raspberry sherbet, and fresh-made lemonade duly iced.

Then, with a zeal worthy of a better cause, forgetful of this morning's handfuls of rice and fowl, and long greasy shreds torn with their own fair fingers from a lamb roasted whole, how they fall to on piles of sweet cakes, ending with a few spadefuls of comfits, laughing and talking all the time, and making light of the whole affair! I wish I could here burst forth with some seraps of Hafiz or Ferdusi, and tell how warm and dark their antelope eyes were, and how the lucid tinge of a summer daybreak lit their cheeks. But, to tell truth, Zobeide was a whale

of a woman, and was ruddled, not merely painted, with rouge ; the fair Persian had Indian ink eyebrows, joining architecturally over her nose ; and Scheherazade was white as a wall with smears of paint that marred her once pretty nose and dimpling mouth. As soon as they were trotted off in their little pea-green and gilt carriage, guardian negress and all, I went into the shop, about which I had all this time been loafingly prowling, and called, clapping my hands, for some violet sherbet ; because Mussulman tradition distinctly tells us that that great Arab epicure and sensualist, Mohamed, called this his favourite beverage. And now do I greatly desire to tell my readers all about the flavour and fragrance of that well and euphoniously named drink ; only one thing prevents me, and that is, that my Turk did not sell it, and no one else that I could find out ever did, so I did not taste it, and cannot compare it to all sorts of things as I should otherwise decidedly have done.

Wine and spirits would not be sold at all in Stamboul—at least openly—but that British subjects claim that privilege of sale. Raki, a sort of fiery oily anisette, peculiarly deleterious, is drunk with great relish by the Greeks, and by those Turks who are lax in their religious observance, whenever they can get it unobserved. I am afraid that tying down poor human nature with unnecessary restraints makes sad hypocrites of man, who find it difficult enough to keep even the great laws, and are always inventing some excuse to slip off Nature's handcuffs. I remember particularly one fresh bright morning that I was on the deck of a Turkish steamer that was ploughing through the Sea of Marmora, and just sighting the Seven Towers, beyond which the cypresses and minarets were rising in a great watchful army, guarding the crescented domes of the still sleeping city. The deck was strewn with Albanians in their hairy capotes, with slavish-looking thievish Greeks, and with Turks grave and cross-legged on their prayer-carpets. Here and there, seated on the benches, were two or three half Europeanised Turks, attempting cumbersomely to imitate the ribald ease of their Greek friends. Threading the still half-sleeping groups, stepped the cafegee of the boat with thimble cups of smoking black coffee (half grounds as the Turks drink it) on his dirty trays. A Greek, in crimson jacket and black worsted lace broderie all over it, suddenly produces an old medicine bottle full of raki, and passes it round. His Greek friends drink and look religiously thankful, for the autumn morning is raw. Three times—nay, four times—he smiles, and offers it to the Turk, who looks away over the boat-side coquettishly. There is a curious constraint in the way he pushes the bottle from him : so Caesar pushed the crown, according to the envious Cassius ; so Cromwell did not push aside the bottle, if Cavalier squibs be true. There is a thoughtful, spurious look about his eye, changing, with the rapidity of a juggler's trick, to a quiet look of content and triumph, as he suddenly accepts the bottle, and slipping behind a fat Greek, takes

an exhaustive slope of its contents. What this man did with hypocritic reluctance, hundreds did—as I was very well assured—without any reluctance at all, under the protection and shelter of a European's roof. They feel the prohibition is absurd ; they know the Sultan has bartered his very throne for a champagne flask, as his father did before him ; so, secretly they drink and are drunken. Indeed, I was told that the more philosophical Turks consider champagne merely a sort of heavenly bottled beer : in the first place, because it froths, which Eastern wine does not ; secondly, because it is of a dull yellow colour, when their wine is red. Besides, as long as nations choose the wisest, and bravest, and best of their nation for monarch, must they not follow his example, and (saving the Prophet) get wisely, bravely, and in the best and most secret way possible, drunk from pure loyalty ?

People have often laughed at Chateaubriand's French dancing-master giving soirées to the Dog-rib Indians, and a better sujet for a farce could scarcely be conceived ; but all incongruous things are ridiculous, when they are not, on the one hand, also hateful, or, on the other, when they do not excite our pity. So, apropos of raki, and the Turkish rakes who drink it, I must describe the small English tavern that I stumbled into just outside the Arsenal walls. It was kept by a Greek, and was in the Greek manner ; but I found it was specially patronised by the English mechanics whom the Sultan keeps to superintend the government manufactories. These intensely English men, of course despising sherbet, which they profanely and almost insultingly called "pig's-wash," and detesting raki because it was the secret beverage of "them precious villains of Turks," resorted to this grimy hostellie, dirtier than the meanest village inn in "dear old England," to wash the steel filings from their throats and the sawdust from their lips, with real expensive, oily, bilious, "old Jamaickey"—so old that the red and green labels on the bottles were brown and fly-blown—and with "Hollands," in square, black-green, high-shouldered Ostade bottles. It was delightful to see the brave, cross-grained, grumbling fellows lamenting English climate and English taxes, cursing the Turks, and wishing they were in Wessex and Double Gloucester again, "with all their hearts;" to see them turning up their sleeves, and hammering on the table for more grapes and more rum ; and to hear them shouting out, "It's my delight, on a shiny night," and "Don't rob a poor man of his beer," and discussing, with absurd eagerness, six-month-old English news—reforms long since become law, and treaties long since broken.

I have heard, indeed, that in the days of Mahmoud (the stern father of Abdul Medjid, "the fainéant"), that despotic Turk who destroyed the Janissaries, and introduced European reforms into Turkey, these bibulous friends of mine had rather a risky and troublesome time of it, for they stood upon their dignity as Britons, got feverish British beer into their brave wrong-headed brains, and were once or

twice "pulled up" and nearly decapitated in a row for not salaaming, "and all that rubbish."

And now, while I am in this tavern den, trying to eat some horseflesh stew, there stands before me a ragged Greek vagabond, crafty as Ulysses, voluble as the winged-worded Pericles, who, in hopes of a stray piastre, harangues me and the engineers on a certain English pasha to whom he was once right hand man. His gestures alone would be eloquence, for he beats his chest, and rends his dirty merino waistcoat.

"He (English pasha) keep white horse, black horse, red horse, blue horse, every sort horse; and I drive him, whip him, saddle him, break him, 'cos he (English pasha) Sultan great friend—every day at palace. I too at palace. I eat lamb, pistachio-nut. I eat kibob (very nice kibob), I drink shirab and champagne wine. I wear scarlet jacket and fustanella—white fustanella—servant under me—horse under me—money—drink—all right—all good. All at once come wicked man to English sultan, whisper ear—say, 'Take care, Anastase bad man, rogue-man.' English sultan call me, tell me, flog me—drive out faithful Anastase—take away horses—everyting. Now, Anastase dirty man, poor man, thief man (laughs ironically), no raki, no kibob, no drink, no eat. Go 'bout ask good rich Englishman for little money. Thank, sir (smiles), drink health!"

#### CONCERNING CRAVATS.

We must not despair. Everything will have its history told in its turn. Already English umbrellas and French lamps have their respective histories in print; then why should not the kind protector of the human windpipe have its useful story related? The art of tying the cravat was written, some considerable number of years since, by an author who signed himself the Baron de l'Empesé; but, although we are assured that the baron brought the patience of a Benedictine monk to his works, he did not exhaust his subject. Could the history of the cravat be told in a hundred printed pages, and with only five illustrative plates? As well endeavour to exhaust the history of England on a sheet of note-paper. The worthy historian of the cravat must consider the men who wear cravats, and the great men who have not worn them. The baron reminds us that the cravat makes the man. Is it not, then, of importance to the world to learn that M. de Chateaubriand and M. de Villèle, two eminent statesmen, could never decently dispose their cravats? Could M. de Villèle conduct a straightforward policy with his neckcloth awry? No. It is to the honour of the baron that, thirty years ago, he discovered a new point of view from which men might advantageously look upon human affairs; that view was from man's necktie! The wearer of the Gordian knot must have been a distinct individual from the creatures who wore Talma knots, or Bergami knots, or cascade

knots, or giraffe knots, or gastronomic knots. We should unhesitatingly declare that an inclination to the Gordian knot betrayed a tendency to diplomacy. Did Brillat Savarin wear a gastronomic knot, and was Cuvier's windpipe hidden by the giraffe? History is silent on these important points.

There have been dabblers, however, in the history of the neckcloth, who have collected materials, suggested chapters, and run up hasty theories. There have been controversies on the origin of cravats, in which the focalia of the Romans make a prominent figure, and in which the pretensions of the Croats are supported and rebutted.

How the neckband of the shirt grew into the prodigious frills of the sixteenth century; how these linen walls fell over upon the manly shoulders of the Puritans of the seventeenth century; how the cravats became effeminate under the second Charles; are progresses which belong to the future historian—to the coming man.

The cravat proper, with its elegantly adjusted folds, it is stoutly asserted, was first brought into France by French officers, on their return from Germany, in sixteen thirty-six. As stoutly is it maintained by Furetière, against Ménage, that the word cravat is nothing more than a corruption of Croat. The Croats, who guarded the Turkish frontiers of Austria, and who acted as scouts on the flanks of the army, wore linen round their necks, tied in front, the officers wearing muslin, or silk. When France organised a regiment on the model of the Croats, these linen croats, or cravats, were also imitated. The Royal Cravat was the name of a French regiment to the time of the French Revolution. So much for the origin of the cravat.

We are reminded that the cravat did not make its way suddenly; since, in the archives of the Calvinistic college in Languedoc, where Bayle was educated, may be seen an order, commanding the scholars to wear black clothing, and not to indulge in canes, cravats, nor other things that violate modesty. But what would the learned doctors of Puylawrens have thought of splendid Louis the Fourteenth's cravats, with scarlet and sky-blue satin knots, and their lace falls? Not that the old Calvinists could have commanded much attention had they been in the neighbourhood of great Louis; French vivacity and audacity had their play there; the humour of the moment was the law of the moment; and this humour took its graceful turns now and then. For instance, the princes, dressing hastily for the battle of Steinkerque, cast their cravats negligently round their throats. After the victory, charming women, looking lovingly at the victors, adorned themselves with gracefully careless little kerchiefs, and called them Steinkerques. Advertisers have vulgarised these feminine gentilesses of old. It is true that Parisian ladies wear, at this moment, Solferino mantillas, and that flâneurs are conspicuous in Cavour shirt-collars; but we know that here are only so many twopences made by

the tradesmen who "inspire" Le Follet. These will have their day, as even the Great Louis cravats had their day.

Way for the flowing Chancellor cravats of Louis the Fifteenth's time!—they also must have their day. And their day shall end at the peace of Hanover, when the Duke of Choiseul shall command the army of France to wear stiff stocks. It was a sad day for French and for English soldiers when these instruments of torture were invented. Civilians soon broke through them; but only to be bound up anew in the starched muslin of Louis the Sixteenth's time. These barricades about the windpipe were especially conspicuous on a certain day when the National Assembly met at Versailles; the stiff military stocks, or elegant lace cravats of the nobility, contrasting strongly (perhaps ominously) with the plain white of the commoners' neckcloths.

The Revolution tore the cravat from men's throats. How could men call loud enough for blood, in the days of Terror, with the windpipe shackled by starched muslin? The Sans-Culottes must have their throats free, for the exercise of their lungs; their enemies must have their throats free, also, for the convenience of La Guillotine. Thus, the Marats would have done violence to the cravat; had not Robespierre set his grim, green head, upon a column of starched muslin, mathematically set up. The cravat was saved; and Republican generals, to make it doubly safe, wore two—a small black one over a large white one. There were generals, however (Pichegru, for instance), who disdained the voluminous starched bands of Paris. How the cravat grew round the chin, till it threatened to Burke the wearer, our readers must remember from the thousands of drawings of this wildly dressing time. Men carried their political faith, in those days, round their necks. The royalists distinguished themselves by wearing green neckcloths. And we, in our turn, imitated even the republicans. The first gentleman in Europe passed his youth wrapped about the neck like a fresh mummy. Brummel must be approached with awe by the coming historian of the neckcloth. Was the delicacy with which he passed his thumb and forefinger round the upper edge of his spotless muslin ever equalled?

Let us treat this subject with the gravity it deserves. We are told that in the year nine of the Republic, the collar began to peep timidly above the cravat. Democratic collar! which in spite of Toryism in brass buttons and nankeens, stoutly defending the cravat in all its integrity, was destined to triumph at last in that particularly demonstrative type of the species known as "the all-rounder!" But—not to anticipate—throughout the Consulate, the cravat held its own, and grew, till the man was almost second to the neckcloth. The Empire brought back some of the lace of royalty. The delicate work of Alençon encompassed the throat of the hero of Arcole on his coronation day. His senators imitated him; and civilians began to strut about with huge white knots, called *choux*. We are

assured that General Lasalle's cravat was thick enough to turn a bullet and save his life; and it has been more than hinted that Napoleon owed the defeat of Waterloo to the fact that on that great day he wore a white cravat, with a flowing knot, "contrary to his custom."

His fall marked the beginning of a perilous era in the history of the neckcloth. The Restoration took to stocks. Stocks of velvet, and even of morocco leather, were adopted. The cravat was at the point of death, when some clever chemist gave it a galvanic spasm, by attaching it to the stock. It was no longer free to float in the air, however. Prodigious golden pins held it fast, until after the revolution of eighteen thirty, when it regained its liberty. But it was clearly in its dotage, and to this hour it remains in obscurity, dreaming of the glorious time when it encircled the throat of the Great Louis.

One of the practical sages of this practical time has calculated that the man who wears a neckcloth, and ties it properly, wastes four thousand hours in forty years upon its knot! This same sage vehemently panegyrises the loose neck gear of the present time. Fond of figures, he bids us enjoy a knowledge of the fact (according to him), that six thousand workwomen make a good living in Paris, in arranging neckties for the civilised world.

Gr. de M.—to whom we humbly confess ourselves indebted for some of the materials for a serious history of the neck-cloth (which we now put at the service of any ambitious frequenter of the British Museum reading-room who may chance to read these lines)—Gr. de M. is not equal to his subject. It overpowers him.

#### FACES IN THE FIRE.

I WATCH the drowsy night expire,  
And Fancy paints at my desire,  
Her magic pictures in the fire.

An island-farm 'mid seas of corn,  
Swayed by the wandering breath of morn,  
The happy spot where I was born.

The picture fadeth in its place;  
Amid the glow I seem to trace  
The shifting semblance of a face.

"Tis now a little childish form,  
Red lips for kisses pouted warm,  
And elf-locks tangled in the storm.

"Tis now a grave and gentle maid,  
At her own beauty half afraid,  
Shrinking, yet willing to be stayed.

"Tis now a matron with her boys,  
Dear centre of domestic joys:  
I seem to hear the merry noise.

Oh, time was young, and life was warm,  
When first I saw that fairy form,  
Her dark hair tossing in the storm;

And fast and free these pulses played,  
When last I met that gentle maid—  
When last her hand in mine was laid.

Those locks of jet are turned to grey,  
And she is strange and far away,  
That might have been mine own to-day—

That might have been mine own, my dear,  
Through many and many a happy year,  
That might have sat beside me here.

Ay, changeless through the changing scene,  
The ghostly whisper rings between  
The dark refrain of "might have been."

The race is o'er I might have run,  
The deeds are past I might have done,  
And sore the wreath I might have won.

Sunk is the last faint flickering blaze ;  
The vision of departed days  
Is vanished even as I gaze.

The pictures with their ruddy light  
Are changed to dust and ashes white,  
And I am left alone with night.

#### MY GIRLS.

An article which has recently appeared in this periodical under the title, "My Boys," has induced the writer—a single lady, somewhat advanced in years—to venture on a few remarks under the heading My Girls, in which it will be shown what are the principal faults and tendencies of the young ladies of this age, and in which one or two suggestions will be thrown out as to the best means of dealing with them.

My Girls—I will speak in the first person, if I may, as I shall then be less likely to make mistakes—my girls are not exactly *my* girls; that is to say, I stand towards them only in the relation of an old maiden aunt, with whom they spend their holidays. They have done so, ever since the death of their parents, which occurred when they were quite in their infancy. My girls are four in number; the youngest is eleven years old, and the eldest eighteen; the other two are somewhere between these ages. The education of my three youngest darlings is still in progress, that of my eldest is supposed to be complete. Now—to burst into the subject at once—to what has that education tended? What are they educated for? With a view to whose gratification have they been taught as they have been taught? With a view to whose torment have they been left untutored as they have been? What object do my girls set before them; what object has been set before them by those who have had the charge of their education?

In this world of uncertainty it is a great thing to be quite sure of anything, and there is one thing that is unmistakably certain, which is, that my girls will either marry or remain single. Now the qualities required of a single woman and a married woman are much more identical than is generally supposed. There are few women who are unmarried who are not required, sooner or later to *work*. If poor, they will have to work for their bread; if well off, they will generally—supposing they follow the path of duty—have to keep home for some brother, to look after some relative's children who have a claim on their regard, or else to bestow their attention on the wants of those only bound to them by the ties of a common humanity. The

single woman, who has none of these things to do, is a very exceptional person.

The house duties of a married woman are too well known, and have been too often dilated upon to need, or even to bear, enforcing here. There is, however, no virtue—if one may use a positive term for a negative quality—which she will need more constantly and more imperatively than unselfishness. Now, thank Heaven, women are naturally unselfish. Selfishness is a male vice, par excellence, and is in some remote degree *with* men excusable. They have to hew their way to every achievement by mowing down so many obstacles, that they are obliged to think of themselves, or they would never get on. Women have, or should have, no identity *wholly their own*, no separate existence in themselves—this is treating of women in their natural state of alliance with men. If a woman (speaking generally) so allied, has any thought at all, except for her husband and children, she is nothing.

This is a strong assertion, but I cannot swerve from it. I cannot advance a single step without it. I cannot say how sure I am that it is so, and that the acceptance of the truth is at the root of all real happiness for women.

Now, the whole tendency of a girl's education, as at present conducted, is to eradicate this natural self-abandonment, and to cultivate that quality of selfishness which, barely, and only in the slightest degree, excusable in men, is, in women, not only a hideous, but an inconceivably dangerous disfigurement.

I observe in my girls a gradually developing audacity and independence which augurs ill for their future. Their looks and carriage are defiant and wholly wanting in humility. They march along with their military heels, their shortened petticoats abruptly terminating like the edge of a diving-bell, and the whole ridiculous mass swaying from side to side as each foot is placed on the ground; they march along as if they were the most important part of creation, and as if the men whom they meet, with the stoop of labour and a weight of care upon their shoulders, were barely good enough to wait upon them. The men do not like this, I suspect. There is no man who, as long as a woman fights with her own arms, and uses the mighty strength of her own most beautiful weakness, but will gladly give way, and yield, if need be, a menial service to women; but it must be accepted as a concession; not demanded as a right.

Men will pay every kind of attention to women, and bestow all sorts of worship and tenderness upon them; but we women should admit that it is not our right, and then that right will never be questioned.

It is not my intention, any more than it was that of the gentleman who recently made some complaints about his boys, to say much about the school education of my girls, or to deprecate the course of instruction through which they are put, while under the care of the excellent Mrs. Primways. I am not going to indulge in common-place diatribes against the too

great attention bestowed on accomplishments at that lady's establishment. Accomplishments are very good things in their place, and we all know that there is no gentleman (worthy of the name) who would not prefer a brilliantly executed piece of Chopin's to a well-served little dinner, and who would not find consolation for every deficiency in his table and household arrangements, in a water-colour drawing of a rustic cottage, with blue smoke coming out of its chimney, a poplar or two, a half-dozen of spruce firs emerging from its roof, and clean agricultural children playing before its door.

There is, then, no gentleman, worthy of the name, who would not prefer accomplishments to housewifery—that is an established fact. But then there is, most unfortunately, a very large class of gentlemen who, in this respect, are unworthy of the name. There is—I say it with sorrow—a very large class of men who, coming home after a hard day's work, would prefer finding a bright little woman waiting for them with a smiling face and a neat and *supervised* (if I may be allowed the expression) dinner, to a greeting of the most triumphant kind on the piano, followed by a meal which gave tokens of having been handed over to the exclusive care of the servants. There are also certain abject men who would hardly be consoled for a series of mistakes in the weekly bills, by the best water-colour drawing—as above described—ever executed by amateur fingers; and, worst of all, there are—I know it for a fact—some men extant who, belonging to professions which tax the head throughout the day to an excess, and in which a day of great effort is not uncommonly bestowed in vain, the work turning out a failure after all; these men, liable, from the tension of the brain, to occasional attacks of irritability, and finding that such irritability is dispersed very rapidly by a few soft and sympathetic words uttered in a woman's gentlest tones—these persons, I say, will hold that, when this fit is on them, it is hardly right or kind of their better halves to take that opportunity to give way to temper, to answer unsympathetically or unkindly, or even to keep a sullen silence, to retire to the sofa and to a study of the Reverend Puncheon Head's last volume of Sermons.

Such men as I have hinted at above exist, and, what is more dreadful still, they are by no means uncommon. Uncommon? I am not sure but that they preponderate. In fact, if the truth must out, I know that they do preponderate.

But it will be said that a wife is not to do the work of servants. No, she is not. But she is to do the work that servants will not or cannot do. No household left to servants will prosper. That supervision spoken of above, is indispensable. Depend upon it the household arrangements will never go on without it. The dinners will fail, and the bills—it is one of the most remarkable things connected with psychological studies to observe the tendency of the human mind, as it is exhibited in the British tradesman, to inaccuracy in his accounts. It is

wholly impossible to explain this phenomenon by any other means than by attributing it to his excessive and morbid philanthropy. He is forever in the most delicate manner suggesting to you that you are too self-denying in your diet. He is always giving you credit, in his little account, for supplementary sweetbreads, chops which are the children of his imagination, half-pounds of beef-suet which were left at the door of your next-door neighbour. His mistakes always take this form; he never by any chance attributes to you a sparer diet than you have indulged in, or omits to post to your discredit a single ounce of that thin end of the neck which was really the joint handed last Wednesday over your area railings. Now, all these things require to be vigilantly looked after, and the wretches of men have a notion that to attend to such matters is part of woman's mission!

Are my girls thus educated, with a view to the cultivation of those qualities which I have shown will be expected of them? Are they taught that one day they will have practical duties to perform—that they will probably have to make the most, for some years at any rate, of a small income? It is astonishing what a "most" may be made of it, by a little thought and good taste. Are they taught that one day they will have to merge their own identity in some one else's identity? Are they initiated in the mysteries of cooking, in the arcana of butchers' bills? I think not.

Now, I have to propose an Institution for girls, for their occupation during the holidays, and at the conclusion of their education, which shall be somewhat analogous (the difference of sex being taken into consideration) to that suggested for boys in the article to which I have already alluded, as appearing a short time ago in the pages of this journal.

My institution is, in one or two respects, to resemble that just spoken of. A considerable degree of attention is to be bestowed on the bodily structure of those who should frequent it, on its growth, its strength, its due development. My girls don't get up early enough in the morning, they don't take exercise enough, they don't eat enough. They are inclined to dawdle, to feel relieved when luncheon-time comes, and the morning is proclaimed by that fact to have passed away. They shall never be allowed to dawdle, or be idle, or listless, in my institution on any pretence whatsoever.

In developing my notion of the "GIRLS' HOLIDAY OCCUPATION INSTITUTE," I propose that there shall be the following classes: A Physical-Education Class; a Cookery Class; a Household Bill-auditing Class; a Shirt-button-Supervision Class; and a Mangy-Gossip-Suppression Class. These are to begin with; many more would suggest themselves as the project advanced.

Some of these classes almost speak for themselves and require but little description of the manner in which they should be worked. The Physical-Education Class, for instance, proclaims by its name that every kind of drill and calis-

thenic exercise, and (for the younger members of the institution) every description of game adapted to feminine habits, should be practised by those who attended it. This is a most important class. The development of bodily strength having much to do with health in women as in men. There is no particular harm either in a woman being able to take a walk with her husband. It will be a good thing for both, and such exercise taken together by two persons who are fond of each other is one of the most rational and pleasant of amusements.

In the Cookery Class the very desirable achievement of killing two birds with one stone is attainable. It is important that in this class there should be a high development of the critical faculty contemplated. It will be necessary that mistakes should be made, in order that the future matron may be taught to find them out, and may learn the best means of preventing them. Let there be, then—since the young ladies who form this class are not to cook themselves, but are only to superintend the cookery of others—let there be a class of girls of inferior rank admitted here, to do the cooking, and while their mistakes will serve to develop the critical faculty of the students in this class, they (the nascent cooks) will gradually learn to avoid these mistakes more and more themselves, until they are at last dismissed as perfect. Other ignorant girls would succeed these, and so we should not only have our young ladies taught to be good judges of all matters connected with the cuisine, but we should have besides, what is much wanted: a constant issue of trained cooks.

It is quite certain that the successful action of this Cookery Class would be materially aided by there being a dining hall, where the young ladies should partake of the viands whose preparation they had superintended, or neglected. They would then reap the reward of their vigilance, or the punishment of their indifference, in the success or failure of the dinner, which, good or bad, they must eat. It is impossible that such misfortunes as the appearance of a soup ornamented with oily circles on its surface, or a fish which should disclose certain pink revelations when cut, and whose flesh should declare a fixed determination to adhere to the bones,—it is impossible, I say, that such accidents as these could be of frequent occurrence, when so hideous a retribution was inseparable from them.

Intimately connected with the Cookery Class would be the Household-Bill-auditing Class. It would come under the duties of its members to decipher the hieroglyphics of which a butcher's bill is invariably composed, to test the accuracy of the weekly accounts by reference to a daily record of all the articles supplied by each tradesman, and to examine into the grounds for the imputation of any item charged. The pupils should in that case take it by turns, every week, to provide the dinner and other necessities connected with the establishment, and they would then be enabled with certainty to

judge of the truth or falseness of the accounts rendered—accounts, let it be remembered, which should from time to time be purposely sent in wrong, to elicit the vigilance of the pupil in its fullest force.

Among the "things not generally known" to which attention has never been sufficiently directed must be ranked the enormous influence of shirt-buttons on home peace; and I consider that the Shirt-button-Supervision Class is among the most important of the different branches of my contemplated Institution. It would require to be very artfully and dexterously managed. The pupils should never know when they were to be called upon to attend this class, and I would take care that such calls were always made at the most infelicitous moments. A pupil should be thoroughly tired out, and should, late in the day, be encouraged, after passing through a perfect curriculum of the previous studies, to cast herself down in an easy-chair cunningly placed in her way, and should be even encouraged to solace herself with the most interesting reading procurable—in other words, a number of this periodical should be placed in her hands. At this moment another pupil, supposed to represent a housemaid, should enter the room, and should utter the awful words, "If you please, mum, the things is come home from the wash; would you please to step up-stairs, and look them over?" To jump up, to cast down the interesting reading, and to "step" up-stairs as requested, would be, with the advanced pupil of my establishment, the work of a moment: while with those who are but newly admitted it would be preceded by much yawning, long delays, and many other recalcitrant strugglings. Nor would the secret wiles connected with the due and proper working of the machinery of this very important class stop when the young lady had "stepped" up-stairs. It would then be necessary that all the imperfect and defective shirts (contributions of which should be invited) should be placed in drawers underneath the linen of a more sound and unimpaired kind; that the attendant handmaid should say, "There's no call to look at them, mum, any ways;" to which the beginner would probably respond, "Very well, Jane;" while the more initiated pupil would, on the other hand, insist on seeing them immediately. There should be provided every delusion and snare known in the annals of laundry that can delude the eye and bewilder the judgment of our young friend. Button-holes slightly enlarged by long use, presenting no longer their usual form of a narrow and constricted slit, but wrought into an abnormal rotundity of orifice, should be there. Casts of buttons left in the linen by mangling, the button itself being absent, should be there; and there, too, should be the button undecided—most dangerous deception of all—which, held on by one, two, or three threads, and stiffened into its place with starch, feels as if it would do, and pleads hard to be left alone till next wash. The pupil who resists this test, and who finds out the button which is split across the middle without

showing it, shall be a prize pupil, shall be considered perfect in this department of the institution, and shall pass on to the higher branches of the Mangy-Gossip-Suppression Class, and the Dress-Resignation Class.

If the different departments already enlarged upon are important, in what words shall I speak of the necessity there is for the prompt organisation of my establishment, in order that the Mangy-Gossip-Suppression Class may be instantly brought into action? Its working should be of this sort. Talking of the freest kind should be promoted among the pupils for a certain length of time, after which they should go through an examination in connexion with it, and the students who were swiftest to detect at what particular points the recent conversation had degenerated into gossip should be promoted to high places in the establishment, and should be exonerated for a certain number of days from attendance in the Household-Bill-auditing and Shirt-button-Supervision Classes—a reward which should likewise be conferred upon all pupils who had declined to listen to stories seasoned with that most piquante of all sauces, the disparagement of a dear and intimate friend. The students in this department should also go through a course of instruction, in which they should be taught to look with suspicion upon all such members of the Institution as should come into the room in a hurried, breathless, and fussy state of importance, saying, "I've come, at great personal inconvenience, to tell you something which I think you ought to know;" or, "I have just heard a report about Miss Lamb, in connexion with last week's bill-auditing, and as to the truth of which Miss Wolf, who is well-informed on the subject, is ready to pledge herself at any moment."

Great pains should be taken with the Mangy-Gossip-Suppression Class. The elder pupils should be instructed to enter into plots with each other for the concoction of some very intricate story, and the junior members of the class should be lured in a' l conceivable ways to listen to accounts of the same, furnished by all sorts of persons, who should be especially qualified for purveying the exact truth of the matter by knowing nothing whatever about it. Then, in reference to this very question of the rights and the wrongs of the dispute between Mesdemoiselles Wolf and Lamb, who is there who could approach the new pupil, little Credula Swallow, with such certain information as to all the particulars of the question in dispute as Miss Chink, who had it from Miss Keyhole, who, in her turn, heard all about it from the next-door-but-five neighbours of the Peep-o'-day-boys, whose estates in Ireland are in immediate contact with the bog-country, which belongs to the Irish branch (non-resident) of the Fox family, who are related, as everybody knows, by the mother's side, to this very Miss Wolf herself, about whom the story is circulated! Of course, the new pupil falls into the trap, and listens to all this, and being punished by a week's auditing of the most intricate (and greasy) butchers' bills

procurable from the London shambles, never listens to any such narratives any more.

The instances of departments quoted above will be sufficient to furnish some idea of the establishment which I propose should be started with as little delay as possible. Many more examples might be given, as, for instance, the Dress-Resignation Class, in which young ladies should be induced to set their hearts on some new-fashioned garment, and should resign it at the request of other pupils, who should be supposed to personate husbands unconvinced of the beauty, and quite convinced, of the expense, of the article of costume in question. A consideration of this branch of my subject suggests to me at once the inquiry: Whom do my girls dress for? Do my eldest girl, for instance, who is engaged to young Mr. Judex, the barrister, dress to please that discriminating personage? Is it to please him that she wears a bonnet with a great, hard, empty crown sticking out behind, which is (or was five minutes ago) the fashion in Paris, and with a blazing ribbon and rosette appended to it? Is it to gratify *his* taste that she puts on a red petticoat with a steel cage underneath it, which renders it impossible for that young man to give her his arm when they walk out, and which swept the cloth and the lamp clean off my work-table only last night? Is it to please Mr. Judex that she does all this? Not a bit of it. I think I have heard that gentleman express, more than once, views on all these matters diametrically opposed to the adoption of the fashions just spoken of. The young ladies dress *for* themselves, and *at* each other.

The details of my Institution grow under my hands, and I find it difficult to abstain from a still more lengthened development of its intention and the manner of its working, than even this into which I have entered. The combination of public nurseries with the establishment, for instance, is a thing that suggests itself at once as desirable. All young girls are fond of nursing, and the advantages that would accrue to my pupils from an occasional superintendence of temporary homes for children whose mothers are employed at work, would be very great indeed.

But whither, some one asks, is all this tending? You are training up these young ladies to be upper-nurses and upper-housekeepers. Not so. I am training them up to be wives and mothers. It must not be forgotten for a moment that my Institution is only supposed to be supplementary to those establishments where the accomplishments and studies of which an ordinary education consists are done ample justice to. What I ask is this: is equal justice done to those accomplishments the importance of which I am venturing to urge?

At my time of life I seldom or never go to parties, but last summer I was persuaded, when at Cheltenham, to attend one of these festivities at the house of a very old and dear friend. At the conclusion of the party, as I was coming away, I happened to look into a back-drawing-room which I thought was empty, and there I

saw a figure which I shall never forget. It was that of an "old young lady," on whom some fifty winters had cast their blighting influence, but who, nevertheless, maintained a youthful style in her dress and general appearance which was very dreadful to behold, and to support which the resources of art had been had recourse to in a very unmistakable manner. She was sitting in an empty room, with the lights flaring and the daylight streaming upon her, and was *playing at patience at a deserted card-table*. It was a celebrated beauty who was thus occupied, and as I looked and remembered what she was once, and what she might have been, I asked myself whether this was a brilliant termination to a career?

There is no dress in the warehouse of Messrs. Howell and James which will so set off and decorate a woman's charms, believe me, as that garb which she weaves about her by her own good deeds. There is no splendour of decoration which will win for her the admiration—to put it on no higher ground—which the reputation that she has ordered her household well, will gain for her from all the world. There is no wreath of flowers, no coronet of jewels, which will surround her head with such a blaze of glory, as this report—that, as a wife and as a mother, she lived without a fault. Let my girls once get this into their heads. Let them once feel assured that they come out to more advantage—a million-fold—occupied in their home duties, than in the gayest ball-dresses that modern ingenuity can devise; once let these things be thoroughly recognised, and I think I may answer for it that the Registrar-General will not have to complain of a decline in the number of marriages, and that Sir Creswell Creswell will have an easier time of it than he has had of late.

#### VITTORIA ACCORAMBONI.

##### A TRUE ITALIAN HISTORY. IN NINE CHAPTERS.

###### CHAPTER VII. A WEDDING EXCURSION.

THE remark of one of the biographers of Sixtus—the monk Tempesti—on the conduct of the Pope towards Orsini, is too curiously illustrative of the moral sense and notions of the time to be passed over. The disobedience of the prince to the precept forbidding him to marry Vittoria, would have afforded, says the monk, an excellent opportunity of taking vengeance for the murder of Peretti. But, having pardoned the first offence when cardinal, Sixtus did not like immediately to punish the second as pope. He, therefore, intimated to him the order to send away his bandit followers, so that if he disobeyed this command "this fault might serve as an opportunity of punishing the first most heinous offence. *A sentiment truly worthy and princely!*"

The general course of the conduct and administration of Sixtus, however, were such as to justify us in believing that his sentiments were less princely than his admiring biographer

supposes on this occasion. There seems no reason to doubt that he absolutely spoke sincerely, and meant what he said, intending to let bygones be bygones, and to act no more severely towards Orsini in the matter of the bandits kept in pay by him, than he did to all the other ruffian nobles of Rome on the same subject.

It never seems, however, to have occurred to Orsini for an instant that the Pope meant nothing more than what he said. That glance from the eye of the man whose kinsman he had murdered seemed to him quite a sufficient assurance that Rome was no longer any place for him. Perhaps, also, he felt no desire to inhabit a city in which law and order were henceforth to be paramount. So he came from the presence of Sixtus, and told Vittoria that they must seek a home elsewhere. She, on her part, was ready enough to turn her back on Rome, for Rome was beginning, we are told, to turn its back on her. Not by any means, it must be understood, because it was felt that her conduct had been base, unwomanly, or criminal, but because it had been *imprudent*, and wanting in sagacity and judgment. "There is no telling," says the historian, "the tittle-tattle and gossip of the Roman ladies about her. One of them, a person of high rank, who had at first been very fond of her, could not refrain from saying, disdainfully, 'See, now, what that silly fool Vittoria has done for herself! She might have been the first princess in Rome; and she has taken for a husband a living gangrene, full of sores, and fifty years old!'"

It is worth noting that to be the wife of a pope's favourite nephew, even though pope and nephew be peasant born, is evidently deemed by the Roman dames of rank a higher position than to be wife to the proudest and most powerful lay baron in Italy. And in a society far too corrupt to recognise honourableness as anything different from profit and power, or to estimate it except in proportion to its productiveness of these, the examples of the Riarei, the Borgias, and the Farnesi, abundantly justify the correctness of their appreciation. Vittoria's mother, it may be said, was of a different opinion. But the choice before her was not between Orsini and a pope's nephew, but between the latter and one who might, or who possibly might never, become the former. It is further very noticeable that the lady of rank who calls Vittoria "a silly fool"—(matta)—for having played her cards as she had done, evidently takes it for granted that she was a consenting party to the murder of her first husband, inasmuch as on no other supposition could it be said that she might have been, as Francesco Peretti's wife, the greatest princess in Rome.

It was about the middle of June, 1585, not quite two months after the election of Sixtus, that Orsini and his wife left Rome. A pretext for their departure—for such a step could not with any decorum be taken by such a personage in those days without a false reason to hide the true one—was found in the recommendation of

his physicians that he should try certain mineral waters in the neighbourhood of the Lago di Garda for his health.

Vittoria and her husband were accompanied on their journey by that Ludovico Orsini of whose dealings with the peace officers of the city the reader has already heard. He, too, as may readily be imagined, found Rome under Sixtus the Fifth no longer a desirable residence. Things were not as they were. The good old times, when a gentleman could live like a gentleman, were gone. Rome was going to the dogs, and he, for his part, did not know what things were coming to. We have heard similar grumblings under similar circumstances, with a similar impression of the accurate truth of the last of the complainer's assertions.

This Ludovico, who had thus fallen on bad times, was a cousin of the prince; and being, as we have seen, a gentleman of high and nice feelings when the honour of the family was in question, had been grievously pained and offended by the misalliance made by the head of his race. The enmity arising from this circumstance was, with that chivalrous sense of justice and fairness which is ever found united with the feelings that moved Ludovico, exhibited by him, not towards the powerful and wealthy head of his house, who "had been bewitched, poor fellow!" but wholly against Vittoria, the bewitching. So that, for her at least, this addition to the family travelling party did not promise to alleviate any of the disagreeable circumstances which necessarily attached to it.

Bearing in mind what journeys were in those days under the best circumstances, one may fancy that Vittoria, with her diseased and shockingly unwieldy husband, and the hostile kinsman, who hated her as the cause not only of disgrace to his family, but of this exile from their homes in the world's capital, did not much enjoy her "bridal trip." We are inclined to be decidedly of the opinion of the Roman lady of rank, and to think that there was nothing, at all events yet, to repay one for murdering a husband.

It was in the territory of Venice that Orsini had determined on seeking a safe asylum and a home. There had been a connexion of long standing between the government of the great republic and the Orsini family, more than one of the name having held command of the forces of the Queen of the Adriatic. And when at length the travellers had arrived within a short distance of the city, the senate sent messengers to offer Orsini a guard of honour, and a public entry into the city. This, however, the prince declined; and thinking, probably, that under all the circumstances the less of publicity attending his movements the better, he determined on not going to Venice at all. Turning his steps, therefore, towards Padua, he hired in that city a magnificent palace for his residence during the coming winter, and then moving on in the direction of the Lago di Garda, established himself for the summer at Salo, a lovely spot at

the head of a little bay on the western shore of the lake, at no very great distance from Brescia.

Ludovico Orsini, in the mean time, had gone on to Venice; and shortly succeeded in obtaining from the senate the command of the Venetian troops in Corfu.

Orsini and his wife remained during the rest of the summer at Salo; where, says the historian, "he hired a superb villa, and strove by various pastimes to divert his wife, and his own profound melancholy caused by his infirmities of body, which became more and more troublesome, and by the memories of Rome, and of his own excesses." The picture of the "interior" of Vittoria and her princely husband in their delicious villa in one of the loveliest spots in Europe, is not hard to imagine. Only we should be inclined to suggest, that in all probability the parts sustained in that domestic drama, as far as the efforts to amuse were concerned, were rather the reverse of the cast supposed by the historian. We cannot but suspect that these "efforts" fell to the share of the young wife, while the all too unamusing patient was the princely husband. Perhaps, also, we might venture to infer that these sweet summer months on the beautiful shores of the lake beloved by poets, were not a period of unmixed connubial felicity to the lady Vittoria. The reward of ambition had not come yet. But perhaps it was coming, and that in no very distant future. That one's newly married husband should weigh twenty stone, and have a "lupa" consuming his bloated limbs, may in one point of view be unfavourable circumstances. But from a different stand-point they may be very much the reverse. After all, a well-jointed widowhood, to be made the most of while yet in the flower of her age and the pride of her beauty, with the rank of a princess, and the revenue of one, might be a better thing than to be the wife of either a pope's nephew or a great prince. We can understand that the position of a wife may well have begun to show itself to the beautiful and accomplished Vittoria as not the most desirable in the world.

Still Vittoria could not disguise from herself that she had rather difficult cards to play. The whole of the great Orsini clan were her enemies, for the same reason that moved the enmity of Ludovico. From the Pope she had little reason to expect either favour or protection. The Duke of Florence, and the powerful Cardinal dei Medici, his brother, were hostile to her, on the grounds which have been explained. Her own eldest brother, the only one of them who had such a position as could have enabled him to afford her any support or protection, had also been estranged from her by the marriage she had contracted in despite of his prohibition. It was a dreary outlook into the future for a young beauty only a few years out of her girlhood. And as her husband's increasing malady brought the consideration of it more closely before her, she felt that she should need all that the most

cautious prudence and self-possession could effect.

Orsini, to do him justice, seems to have been anxious, when the conviction of the great precariousness of his life forced itself on him, to make the best provision he could for her who had been either the partner or the victim of his crime. About the beginning of November in that autumn of 1585, he made spontaneously, as the historians especially assure us, a will bequeathing to Vittoria a hundred thousand crowns in money, besides a very considerable property in plate, jewels, furniture, carriages, horses, &c. It was further ordered that a palace should be purchased for her in any city of Italy she might select, of the value of ten thousand crowns, and a villa of the value of six thousand. Moreover, a household of forty servants was to be maintained for her. And the Duke of Ferrara was named the executor of this will.

Having made this provision, the prince determined on a journey to Venice in search of better medical aid. But a journey in this direction did not by any means suit the plans which Vittoria had determined on. Reflecting on the dangerous amount of hostility which would surround her on every side as soon as her husband should have breathed his last, and conscious that this would be increased by the exorbitancy of the provisions of the will in her favour, she had made up her mind that her only safe course was to get her husband out of Italy while it was yet possible, over the Swiss frontier, which is at no great distance from Salo, so that at the moment of his death she and her property might be in safety under the protection of the Cantons. But the journey to Venice threatened to destroy this scheme, for it became daily more evident that the end was not far off.

Vittoria, therefore, strove to persuade him, before they had got far on their way, to return to Salo. And, as the sufferings of the invalid in travelling were greater than he had anticipated, she had not much difficulty in doing so; though the difficulty of moving, which drove him back, seemed to promise ill for the scheme of getting him to travel very far in the opposite direction.

On the twelfth of November, however, Orsini felt a little better. On the thirteenth his physicians bled him, and left him with somewhat of better hope that, by strict attention to a severe system of diet, and extreme temperance, some degree of restoration might be looked for. To Vittoria this reprieve was all-important, as promising a possibility of putting her plan for escaping into a secure asylum into execution. The noble patient only knew that he felt better than he had for many days; and, little in the habit of suffering a denial to the demands of any of his appetites, and delighted to find that any of them were still sufficiently alive to afford him the means of a gratification, he ordered, as soon as ever the doctors were out of the house, that dinner should be served him. Nobody dared to disobey or to remonstrate; so fine a thing is it

to be too great a man to be contradicted. The dinner was brought, and once again the gross body had the pleasure of swallowing. The prince, says the historian, ate and drank as usual. But, scarcely had he finished his repast, before he fell into a state of insensibility; in which condition he remained till two hours before sunset, when he expired.

#### CHAPTER VIII. WIDOWHOOD IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY: ITS PROS AND CONS.

THIS sudden catastrophe was a terrible blow to Vittoria, who seems to have been perfectly well aware of all the dangers and difficulties of her position. "As soon as she saw that the prince was dead," writes the monk Tempesti, "the ill-advised Vittoria fell into a swoon; and when she recovered from it, gave way to utter despair, oppressed by the tumult of thoughts which all at once rushed to her mind. She thought of the loss of her present grandeur, of the necessity of returning to an obscure life without protectors and without support, exposed to the rage of the Orsini, detested by Ludovico, by the Cardinali dei Medici, and by all that royal family. She saw vividly before her, her first murdered husband, who upbraided her with the great love he had borne her. And this painful thought was rendered more insupportable by the consideration of the incomparable greatness of the Peretti family, now that Sixtus was pope. Overpowered by these bitter reflections, which thus shaped themselves to her mind, 'If only I had had better judgment, I should now be a princess in the enjoyment of every happiness in Rome! I should be waited on, courted, worshipped by all Rome, instead of being an exile, a wanderer, with treachery around me on all sides, and odious to Sixtus, whom I have so deeply outraged!' She felt so keen a pang of shame and despair, that she seized a pistol to put an end to her troubles. But her brother Flaminio (who had joined her immediately after her husband's death) struck it from her hand."

Her brother Marcello had also joined her at Salo, and the first step they took was to write to announce the death to her enemy Ludovico, who was still, it seems, at Venice, not having yet departed to enter on his new duties at Corfu.

Prince Paolo Giordano Orsini had left by his first wife, Isabella dei Medici, a son, Virginio Orsini, who was at the time of his father's death being educated at Florence, under the care of the duke, his maternal uncle. This young man was, of course, the natural heir of the deceased prince; and the will made in favour of his widow, though it in no wise touched the immense territorial possessions, nor would, according to our mode of feeling on such matters, appear an unreasonably large provision for the widow of a man of such fortune and position, was denounced by the family as monstrously unjust towards the heir. Their first step was to attempt to set the document aside, legally, on the ground of its having been made *at the instigation of too violent an affection*.

Vittoria, when the first violence of her despair had in some degree subsided, on looking round her to see where she might hope for aid, decided on making three applications. Her first letter was to the Duke of Ferrara, who had been named the executor of her husband's will. And the duke, it would seem, promised that he would, and did take care, that any questions arising on it should be honestly and fairly determined by the proper tribunals, and that it should receive full execution. The second letter was to the senate of Venice, in which she set forth her friendless position, mentioned modestly her claims on the protection of the republic as the widow of an Orsini, and besought the senators to see that she had justice done her. This application also was favourably received; and the senate ordered their governor in Padua to see that she was put in possession of at least that valuable movable property in jewels, &c., which was then in that city. The third application was a more difficult one to make; and in it she took a totally different tone. In her letters to the Duke of Ferrara and to the Venetian Senate, she evidently had not abandoned the hope of securing the splendid position which her husband had intended to provide for her. But in the third, which was to no other than Pope Sixtus, she represents herself to stand in a very different position. She appears to take it as certain, in writing to him, that she shall fail in making good her claim to any provision whatever under her husband's will; does not even intimate any intention of resisting the intentions of his family; talks much of her remorse, and repentance, disgust with the world and all its vanities; and begs of his charity an alms of five hundred crowns to enable her to enter some convent either in Rome or Venice. It may be shrewdly doubted whether Vittoria intended this humble plea for the injured Pope's merciful consideration to be taken by him quite literally. Sixtus, however, either did not, or would not, see any other meaning in it. His sister Camilla, whose agony for the loss of her son we have seen, and who found it too hard a task to pardon the false wife, who had, as she doubted not, conspired to murder him, would fain have had the Pope reject her supplication. But, "What!" said Sixtus, "if this wretched creature repents, and wishes to spend the remainder of her life in God's service, shall we, his Vicar, refuse to her the means of doing so?" So he gave orders that the exact sum asked, neither more nor less, should be remitted to her at Padua.

Vittoria wrote also to her brother, the Bishop of Fossombrone, acquainting him with the misfortune that had befallen her. It is likely that she had placed no great reliance on help or comfort from this quarter. But she, in all probability, hardly expected to receive a reply, in which the right reverend prelate, whose morals had by this time, it is to be supposed, reached a pitch of the most aggravating sanctity, told her, that since her present position was miserable, and there was every reason to suppose that worse was at hand, she ought to thank God for

having thus shown her the vanity of all earthly hopes and pleasures, and put the passing hours to profit in preparing herself for eternity, as it was very evident that the Orsini would not be content without compassing her death.

The dramatis personae of this faithful extract from the chronicles of the good old times, are, every one of them, it must be admitted, far from engaging characters. But the present writer may mention, as a little bit of confidence between him and the reader, that he, for his part, would experience less repugnance in taking any one of them by the hand—even the noble twenty-stone Orsini himself—than this young man of saintly morals developed into a bishop.

In the mean time, Ludovico Orsini had arrived in Padua from Venice; and his first interview with the beautiful widow showed her only too clearly what she had to expect of justice, forbearance, or knightly bearing from so illustrious a nobleman. He came with a retinue of armed men at his heels, whom he bade to surround the house, and keep good watch that nothing left it; while he went in, and roughly calling the frightened widow to his presence, bade her give account to him of everything the late prince had left. Having no means of resistance, Vittoria had no choice but to obey. But Ludovico, finding, we are told, that certain objects of value which he knew his cousin to have had in his possession were not forthcoming, became so violent in his threats, that, being in fear for her life, she produced the missing articles, "and gave him good words, and behaved with so much submission, that he wrote off to the Cardinal dei Medici, that there would be no difficulty in the business, and that the whole matter was in his own hands." On learning, however, shortly afterwards, that, notwithstanding her timidity and apparent submissiveness, the widow had already made application to powerful protectors, and had taken steps for the enforcing of her legal rights, the noble bully was all the more enraged, from having prematurely boasted to the Medici of his power to crush her and her pretensions so easily. Vittoria, moreover, immediately, as it would seem, after this scene of violence, took the prudent step of removing to the house her husband had hired in Padua. She was there more immediately under the protection of the podesta of that city, who had been charged by the senate to see that the will in her favour was duly carried into execution as far as the goods situated within the territory of the republic were concerned; and was altogether, in such a city as Padua, less exposed to any lawless violence than at Salo.

Meanwhile the Duke of Ferrara had also been taking steps to have Vittoria's title to the chattel property duly decided by the Venetian courts. And on the twenty-third of December a decision was given on the various points raised in her favour. Whether she would ever be able to make good her claim to the remainder of the large property to which she was entitled under her husband's will, seemed exceedingly doubtful. But, as was always the case at that period,

when a very much larger portion of the wealth of the rich consisted in plate, gems, tapestry, and other such movable goods, than in these days of public funds and joint-stock companies, the property secured to her by the decision of the Venetian courts was very considerable, sufficiently so in all probability to have already worked a change in the fair widow's views as to the desirability of ending her days in a convent, and certainly not disposing her to adopt her reverend brother's pious and fraternal mode of looking at her position and prospects.

But if the sentence of the judges at Padua was of sufficient importance to make a notable difference in the prospects of Vittoria, it had unhappily a fully proportionate effect in exacerbating the rage and cupidity of her enemies. And the result which followed in the powerful and populous walled city of Padua, under the strong and vigilant government of the Republic of Venice—by far the best of any then existing in Italy—is a notable and striking sample of the social life of the sixteenth century.

That same night, the night of the twenty-third of December, the house in which Vittoria was living was forcibly entered by forty armed men in disguise. The first person they met was Flaminio Accoramboni, who was immediately slain. Marcello, the other brother, had left the house but a short time previously, and thus saved his life. The assassins then proceeded to the chamber of Vittoria, and one of them, a certain Count Paganello, as it afterwards appeared, seized her by the arms, as she threw herself upon her knees, and held her, while Bartolomeo Visconti—another noble, observe—plunged a dagger into her side, and “wrenched it upwards and downwards until he found her heart.”

#### CHAPTER IX. THE MAJESTY OF THE LAW.

HAD the deed thus quickly done, and quickly told, been perpetrated in those days in any other part of Italy save the territory of the Queen of the Adriatic (and, it is fair to add, save Rome, also, during the short five years of the papacy of Sixtus the Fifth), this history would probably have been all told, and have ended here. But the government of Venice, with all its faults, did perform more of the duties for which all governments are established, than that of any of the Italian states of that day, and meted out justice with an impartiality and a vigour unknown elsewhere. How much vigour was needed for the task, and how hard a struggle law—even in the hands of the powerful and unbending oligarchy of Venice—had with lawless violence, is curiously shown by what follows.

The paucity of dates, universal in the old Italian chroniclers, has already been complained of. But with regard to the concluding facts of this history, we are puzzled by the multiplicity of them. They all, however, especially as given by a contemporary writer, whose account was reproduced in the pages of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* some twenty years ago, mention days of

the month only. The murder of Vittoria is stated to have taken place on the night of the twenty-third of December. And the French writer tells the story as not doubting that this was the December following the November in which Orsini died. Yet it is hardly possible to suppose that all which must have happened in the interim, the protest against the will, the consultations between Ludovico and the Medici at Florence, the action in the matter of the Duke of Ferrara, and, above all, the legal examination and decision of the Paduan law courts, all took place within forty days. Moreover, some of the dates assigned to the remaining facts of the story are evidently erroneous. Assuming, then, that the date of the murder is correctly given, as being that least likely to have been forgotten, the remaining facts may best be told, without attempting any accurate statement of the days on which they occurred. They no doubt happened as related, immediately after the commission of the murder.

On the morning following, the bodies of the murdered brother and sister were laid in a neighbouring church, and all Padua thronged to see the pitiful sight. The exceeding beauty of Vittoria moved to frenzy the pity and indignation of a people whose capacity for emotion was fostered and cultivated by every peculiarity of the social system in which they lived at the expense of their reflective powers and judgment. They “gnashed with their teeth,” as the historian says, against those who could have the heart to destroy so lovely a form. Of course the news of *such* a murder was very rapidly spread all over Italy; and when it reached Rome, the monk biographer of Sixtus naïvely tells us, the Pope, who was in the act of sending off the five hundred crowns which poor Vittoria had asked of his charity, locked them up, and then visited “the seven churches” to pray for her soul instead.

It required very little sagacity to guess who was the author of the audacious crime which had been committed. And the magistrates of Padua sent at once to Ludovico Orsini to summon him to an examination. He presented himself at the tribunal with forty armed men at his back. The “Captain of the City”—the head of the executive power—shut the gates of the town-hall against this band, and signified to the prince that he could bring in with him only three or four followers. He pretended to assent, but immediately on the door being opened, the whole of the band rushed in. Before the magistrates he began to bluster, affecting to consider himself exceedingly ill-treated in being thus summoned before a court of justice. Men of his rank, he said, were not wont to be questioned. As for the death of the late prince's wife, and that of her brother, he knew nothing of the matter; but he should hold the magistrate responsible for the safeguard of the property she had held in her hands, which he demanded should be delivered over to him.

In all sincerity, the noble and lawless mur-

derer was probably no little astonished at the measures the Venetian magistrates were taking. His Roman experiences fully justified him in thinking that it was quite out of the question that a man of his name and station should be in earnest called upon to answer for his deeds. And he probably little thought, even yet, that the outrage his bravoes had committed would be followed by any serious results. When ordered to put his answer to the questions of the tribunal into writing, he positively refused to degrade himself by doing anything of the kind. But he offered to show the magistrates a letter, which he had written to his relative, the Prince Virginio Orsini, at Florence, in which the truth, as far as he was concerned, respecting the late occurrences, was stated, and which he demanded to be allowed to send. The magistrates consulted on the propriety of at once arresting him. But the presence of his band of armed followers, and the certainty that the arrest would not be effected without the loss of probably many lives, induced them to temporise. He was permitted to send the letter, which, of course, represented him as altogether ignorant of the means by which the Princess Vittoria had met her death, and to depart from the town-hall.

But the magistrates gave instant orders that the gates and walls of the city should be guarded, and no one permitted, without special license, to leave the town. They also caused the messenger, who was carrying Orsini's letter to his cousin, to be stopped as soon as he was clear of the city gates; and, on searching him, found a second letter, to the following effect:

"TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS LORD, THE PRINCE  
VIRGINIO ORSINI.

"MOST ILLUSTRIOUS SIGNOR. We have executed that which was determined on between us; and that in such sort, that we have entirely duped the noble Captain Tondini [probably the chief of the Paduan magistrates], so that I pass here for the most upright man in the world. I did the job in person. Do not fail, therefore, to send here forthwith the people you know of."

This letter was immediately sent off to Venice by the magistrates. And the same evening (say the contemporary accounts, though, bearing in mind the distance, about twenty miles, and the usual rate of locomotion at that day, this seems hardly credible) a special commissioner, Signor Luigi Bragadino, no less a man than one of the chiefs of the Council of Ten, arrived in Padua with full powers from the senate, and orders to take, alive or dead, at any cost, Ludovico Orsini and all his followers.

The lion of St. Mark was a different guess sort of power to have to deal with from the imbecile and corrupt successors of St. Peter, under whose no-rule Orsini had formed his ideas of public justice. Things began to look very serious. But still he could not yet imagine that it would literally come to pass that *he* should be seized and brought to trial, like a common plebeian. He thought, probably, that a show of resistance

would be sufficient to convince the magistrates that the easiest and best course was to drop the matter, as he had so often seen to be the case. So he gathered his men into his house, barricaded doors and windows, and prepared to stand a siege.

The audacity, and to modern notions, the absurdity, of an individual thus attempting to brave the whole power of the state, and that state Venice, is to us hardly intelligible. But powerful as the senate of Venice was—far more powerful than any other Italian government of that period—and fully determined as the magistrates were to vindicate the outrage done to their authority by the perpetrators of the late crime, "at any cost," as their orders ran, the means to which they were obliged to resort for the attainment of this end are a very significant proof of the sort of difficulties the civil power had to contend with in sixteenth-century Italy.

Luigi Bragadino, chief of the dreaded Ten, immediately on his arrival proceeded to the town-hall, and sat there in council with the podesta and captain more than an hour. A proclamation was then issued, calling on all well-disposed subjects of St. Mark to present themselves armed in the neighbourhood of the house occupied by the prince. Those who had no arms were directed to apply at the fortress, where arms would be distributed to them. Two thousand ducats were promised to any man who should deliver Ludovico Orsini, alive or dead, to the captain; and five hundred ducats for any one of his followers. Cannon were placed on the city walls, near which the house held by the enemy was situated. Boats full of armed men were stationed on the river, which likewise passed near the house, to prevent the possibility of escape by that means. A body of cavalry was placed in an open spot in the vicinity. Barricades were erected in the streets of the city, in case the enemy should make a united sally against the citizens. And, finally, all persons who were not armed were enjoined to keep within doors, that they might not run into danger needlessly, or embarrass the movements of the armed men.

It must be admitted that these preparations for the arrest of a murderer testify that the Venetian government, if it declined to admit the noble Signor Ludovico's theory that an Orsini ought to be allowed to do whatever he pleased unquestioned, was at least abundantly impressed with the difficulty of laying hands on so great a man. One of the old writers, indeed, who has recorded these warlike dispositions, seems to have felt that his readers might be struck by the apparent disproportion of the extent of them to the object in view. And to explain it, he enlarges on the consideration that the desperadoes under Orsini's orders, though but forty men, were all soldiers, thoroughly armed, accustomed to warfare, and to desperate deeds of all sorts, opposed to citizens altogether unused to arms. And he seems to imply that even the paid men-at-arms at the disposal of the city

authorities, were naturally to be expected to be soldiers of a very different stamp from the dare-devil ruffians in the pay of Orsini.

When these manifold preparations were all ready, three of the principal citizens of the town were sent to Orsini to ask if he would surrender; intimating that in doing so lay his only hope of mercy.

The noble felon took a very lofty tone with these ambassadors. If all the forces assembled against him were immediately withdrawn, he said, he would consent to meet the magistrates with three or four only of his followers, "to treat respecting the matter," on the express condition that he should be at liberty to return to his house whosoever he so pleased.

The magistrates, on receiving this insolent reply, sent the bearers of it back again, with orders to assure Orsini that if he did not at once and unconditionally surrender himself, they would raze the house to the ground. He answered, that he would die rather than make such a submission. So the attack was begun.

The magistrates might, one of the narrators tells us, have levelled the house with the ground by one discharge of all the artillery they had. And they were blamed by public opinion for not doing so, inasmuch as the course adopted by them involved a greater risk of the possibility that the besieged might make a sortie. And then, said the townsfolk, who knew what the result might have been? But the worthy chief of the Ten, who, in the midst of his vigorous measures "had yet a prudent mind," and did not forget that St. Mark would have a bill to pay for the mischief done, when it was all over, was bent on unkennelling the vermin with as little damage to property as might be.

One or two guns accordingly were directed against a colonnade in front of the house, which speedily came down. This did not seem, however, to abate a jot the courage of the besieged, who kept up a brisk fire from the windows, without, however, doing other damage than wounding one townsman in the shoulder. Some cannon of heavier calibre were then directed against one corner of the main building, and at the first discharge brought down a large mass of wall, and with it one Pandolfo Lesprati, of Camerino, "a man of great courage, and a bandit of much importance. He was outlawed in the States of the Church, and the illustrious Signor Vitelli had put a price of four hundred crowns on his head for the murder of Vincent Vitelli, who had been killed in his carriage by stabs given by Ludovico Orsini by the arm of Pandolfo. Stunned by his fall, he could not move, and a certain man, a servant of the Lista family, advanced and very bravely cut off his head, and carried it to the magistrates at the fortress."

Another shot brought down another fragment

of the house, and with it another of the chiefs of Ludovico's band, crushed to death in the ruins. Orsini now became aware that further resistance was hopeless. It was evident that the magistrates were in earnest in their determination to have him in their power; and bidding his people not to surrender till they had orders from him, he came out and gave himself up. He, probably, still thought that the senate would not think of proceeding to extremity with "a man of his sort," as he frequently said. And when brought before the magistrates he behaved in this supercilious manner, "leaning against the balcony, and cutting his nails with a little pair of scissors," while they questioned him. When told that he would be imprisoned, he desired only that it might be in some place "fit for a man of his quality;" and on that condition he consented to send orders to his followers to surrender.

The town soldiers, therefore, entered the house, and marched off to prison, two and two, all the survivors they found in it; and "the bodies of the slain were left to the dogs!" Ludovico Orsini was strangled in his prison the same night. Two of his men were hung the next day; thirteen the day after; "and the gallows," says the contemporary chronicler, "is still standing for the execution of the remaining nineteen, on the first day that is not a festival. But the executioner is excessively fatigued, and the people are, as it were, agonised by the sight of so many deaths. So they have put off the remaining executions for a couple of days."

And so ends the history of the marvellously beautiful Vittoria Accoramboni and her two husbands; a striking, but by no means unique or abnormal sample of a state of society produced and fashioned, according to the certain and invariable operation of God's moral laws, by the same evil influences, lay and spiritual—absolutely the same in kind, if somewhat mitigated in intensity—from which Italy is now straining every nerve to escape.

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